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Albany Trust

WINTER TALKS

1962-63 Series

C. H. BOLTON

DR. W. LINDESAY NEUSTATTER

KENNETH ROBINSON, M.P.

GORDON WESTWICH

ANNE ALLAN, J.P.

ANTONY GREY

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WINTER TALKS

1962-63 Series

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WINTER TALKS

1962–63 Series

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Introduction

The first series of Albany Trust Winter Talks, which took place between October 1962 and March 1963, was in the main concerned with homosexuality. They attracted an average audience of 100, and in view of their success the Trustees propose to make a series of Albany Trust lectures devoted to social topics an annual event.

For reasons of space, it has only been possible to reprint a selection of the questions and answers which followed each talk. The talks themselves, however, are reprinted substantially as they were delivered.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to the speakers who prepared and delivered these Winter Talks, both for doing so and for permitting them to be reprinted here. The views which they expressed are of course their own, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Trustees or the policy of the Trust.

The Trustees acknowledge with thanks the kind permission of Dr. Basil James and the Editor of the *British Medical Journal* to reprint a summary and quotations from "A Case of Homosexuality Treated by Aversion Therapy" by Dr. James, originally published in the *British Medical Journal* of March 17, 1962; and also of H. Montgomery Hyde, Q.C., and Messrs. William Hodge Ltd. to reprint an extract from the late Sir Travers Humphreys' Foreword to the first edition of Mr. Montgomery Hyde's *Trials of Oscar Wilde*, in the "Notable British Trials" series.

Thanks are also due to the Chairmen of the various meetings, and to all those who assisted in various ways in the organisation of the Winter Talks—especially M. J. Harding, who typed the transcripts of the tape-recorded talks so that this booklet could be produced.

ANTONY GREY

I

C. H. ROLPH: Homosexual Law Reform

MR. KENNETH WALKER (*in the Chair*), introducing Mr. Rolph, said that although the Wolfenden Report was very clear in its recommendations, no notice had been taken of them. A lot of people still had muddled ideas on the subject. It was necessary to get people to see the situation clearly and with some enthusiasm, for it would take a great deal of effort to get the Government to act. "Sending consenting adult homosexuals to prison—what a deplorable way of dealing with the problem. It could not be worse from the psychological point of view."

MR. ROLPH: I do not know any other aspect of law reform that is so beset with difficulties as this one—subjective ones in particular. I think the best way to illustrate these is to imagine that this country so far forgot itself as suddenly to make it illegal to be a Communist. I don't mean to be a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain—I mean just simply to be a Communist, "in public or in private". And suppose we were concerned, you and I, or suppose I was concerned, with people who felt like me, to get this law repealed, and we held meetings and we wrote articles with that end in view. Some of us would be afraid of getting ourselves known, as I have to some extent got myself known, as a supporter of dangerously liberal causes; and we should all be sitting here tonight narrowly regarding our neighbours, and wondering if they were Special Branch officers, or men from M.I.5, and since we wouldn't want to be taken for Communists, we should all be trying to look like members of the Primrose League or the committee of Boodle's Club.

It might be said that no-one has the same urgent desire or the same urgent need to see a change in this law as the man who is consciously homosexual himself. I am not so sure about that: I think it matters profoundly to all of us. I think it matters to those of us, firstly, who hate the persecution of minorities; and I think it matters to the mothers and fathers of boys who may meet this problem and be overcome by it, and whose lives could, as we all know, be laid waste by it. It matters to those who believe, as I do, that a better way to cope with blackmail is to remove the mainspring of that loathsome crime, rather than to vent our anger on the criminal—

the blackmailer—and send him off to Dartmoor. It matters to the security forces, and those who enforce the espionage laws and the Official Secrets Act—not because a homosexual Government servant is a bigger liability in himself, but because the asinine state of the criminal law of England makes him so by giving his life a background of constant fear of exposure. If he is in bondage to a foreign power, it is the law of England (almost unique in Europe) that has made it easier for him to be.

It matters—and I think this is vitally important—to the social workers who are trying to help homosexual men and youths out of their difficulties, helping them to adjust their lives so that they should be less at odds with society. At present, a welfare worker who has received the confidences of a homosexual could in theory be required by law to divulge in court what he has been told. For analogous reasons it matters to solicitors who are consulted by clients in this difficulty, although in their case the privilege attached to the lawyer-client relationship puts them in a much stronger position. It matters to the doctor, the general practitioner as well as the analyst. It matters to the priesthood, who were practising their healing forgiveness long before words like psychiatry and analysis were invented. It matters to the police, who are required to concern themselves with the physiological eccentricities of a few harmless citizens when they would be better employed in reducing the present odds in favour of the pay-roll bandits. And it matters to the newspaper-reading public, who at present are regaled with mysterious and titillating stories about men arrested for committing "a certain offence," and whose reaction builds up the atmosphere of holier-than-thou condemnation by which the present law is sustained.

We all, in fact, have some interest, whatever our biological make-up may be, in the reform of this cruel and stupid and ill-considered branch of the criminal law of England. Having said that, I want to make two important qualifications: First, so far as the law is concerned, I would never urge that homosexual behaviour of an indecent nature should be allowed in public places. But the standard by which that decency should be judged should be precisely the same as for heterosexual behaviour in public places, and I think the law should continue to prohibit solicitation and importuning as it does now—though I would suspect that, as in other European countries, a withdrawal of the law's interference in private homosexuality between consenting adults would bring about a great reduction in public solicitation and importuning. Secondly, I should always be concerned to maintain the protection of children, and indeed of young people up to the age of 18 or 21. In those two matters I am speaking also for the Homosexual Law Reform Society. They are concerned to protect the public decencies and young people.

Let me now remind you, with apologies to anyone here to whom this is familiar territory, of how the law of England came to be what

it is. Before the Reformation, the offence of sodomy was an ecclesiastical offence only, and one of the blessings of the Reformation was that it enabled Henry VIII, that pillar of heterosexual convention, to make it a temporal offence, punishable in the King's Courts with death. "Bloody Mary" (who got that name only for killing people who went to the wrong church) repealed this law, but Queen Elizabeth I brought back the death penalty for it, and not until 1861 was this changed to life imprisonment. Since then, the most severe sentence has seldom if ever been more than ten years (which in God's name is long enough), though the statutory maximum still remains unchanged under the Sexual Offences Act of 1956, and penalties vary enormously geographically and according to the moral indignation or the dyspeptic state of the judge dealing with the case.

The first specifically homosexual offence—the offence that can be committed only between one man and another—was what is now called "gross indecency". This is generally held to have been made punishable for the first time in 1885, by a Criminal Law Amendment Act that was intended originally to deal solely with the protection of women and girls. Let me read you a short account of it, given by the late Mr. Justice Humphreys, who defended Oscar Wilde at his second trial. He gives it in a foreword to Montgomery Hyde's edited version of *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, published by William Hodge in their "Notable British Trials" series:

> "Oscar Wilde was accused of offences against Section Eleven of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885. Until that Act came into force, on the 1st January, 1886, the criminal law was not concerned with alleged indecencies between grown-up men committed in private. Everyone knew that such things took place, but the law only punished acts against public decency or conduct tending to the corruption of youth. The Bill in question, entitled "A Bill to make further provision for the protection of women and girls, the suppression of brothels and other purposes", was introduced and passed in the House of Lords without any reference to indecency between males. In the Commons, after a second reading without comment, it was referred to a committee of the whole House. In committee Mr. Labouchere moved to insert in the Bill the clause which ultimately became Section Eleven of the Act, creating the new offence of indecency between male persons in public *or private*."

Sir Travers Humphreys then continues: "Such conduct in public was, and always had been, punishable at common law". I take leave to differ from His Lordship in that one respect, because I think that public indecency, to be punishable at common law, has always needed the presence of two or more witnesses, and he doesn't mention that. It seems to be an important qualification which he has overlooked. He goes on:

> "There was no discussion except that one member asked the Speaker whether it was in order to introduce at that stage a clause dealing with a totally different class of offence from that against which the Bill was directed. The Speaker having ruled that anything could be introduced by leave of the House, the clause was agreed to without further discussion, the only amendment moved being one by Sir Henry James with the object of

increasing the maximum punishment from twelve months to two years, which was also agreed to without discussion.

"It is doubtful whether the House fully appreciated that the words 'in public or private' in the new clause had completely altered the law; but as soon as the Royal Assent had been given and the Act was published, there began a spate of correspondence in the newspapers, both legal and lay, and references to the subject on various public platforms, which were duly reported. A learned Recorder dubbed it 'The Blackmailer's Charter', and an eminent Q.C. prophesied that juries would refuse to convict where the alleged acts were in private and not visible to any member of the public. On the other hand, those interested in the welfare of girls welcomed the Act as a whole so warmly (and indeed it was an excellent Act, apart from Section Eleven), and it was so clearly impossible to do anything except to let the law take its course, that after a few weeks the clamour died down and the public interest became centred upon some more savoury topic. The criticisms proved to be not without foundation. The reluctance of juries to convict in such cases is notorious"—

—it is a notoriety that has escaped me, by the way, because it has never seemed to me that they were particularly reluctant to convict—

—"while no-one having experience in such matters would deny that the words 'in private' have materially assisted the blackmailer in his loathsome trade.

"I have referred to the history of Section Eleven, not for the purpose of reviving the old controversy as to whether the satisfaction of sending to prison some of those who offend against it 'in private' outweighs the harm done in other directions, but because there was a belief in some minds at the time that its unpopularity would assist Wilde. As it was put by a legal friend of mine: 'We shall see which the jury dislike most—Section Eleven or Oscar Wilde.' Something caused a disagreement among the jury at the first trial; what occasioned, it we do not know. It is not inconceivable that some one or more of the jurors held views upon the matters I have been referring to. Certain it is that no-one has had the hardihood to propose the extension of the law upon the subject to women, though Lesbianism is not unknown in this country."

Now there again His Lordship was wrong, because that has been proposed. The House of Lords tried to do it in 1921—an astonishing gesture, which failed after a fairly long debate. But the curious thing about this passage I've just read to you is this: that so far as I know, it is the only authoritative statement that private acts of so-called indecency were not unlawful before they were brought into the courts by the virtuous Mr. Labouchere. I have never felt entirely satisfied that in the years that preceded 1885 this offence was in fact not punishable. If it was, it is an important consideration which should occupy the minds of anyone trying to change the law today, because private sexual behaviour that could only be called "gross indecency" within the modern meaning must have been as common then as it is now.

Sir Travers Humphreys was of course a formidable authority, but he could be wrong. At any rate, even if the Labouchere Amendment had never been passed, there is no knowing today what the House of Lords might do on recent form, and therefore I personally would like to see something more positive than the mere repeal of the Labouchere Amendment. I would like Parliament to declare positively that

private morality of this kind is no concern of the criminal law. The Wolfenden Committee recommended that. They recommended that the Labouchere Amendment should be abolished. Not many attempts at doing this have been made in the 77 years of its operation. Even the most recent attempt to modify the rigour of the law, a modest Bill introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Leo Abse in the Spring of 1962, confined itself to four simple propositions valuable enough in themselves: first, that offences committed in private should not be prosecuted without the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Attorney-General; secondly, that no prosecution should be possible when more than one year had gone by since the offence; thirdly, that the offence known as "gross indecency" should be triable by magistrates instead of having to go for trial before a judge and jury, and should have a maximum penalty of six months instead of two years; and fourthly, that before passing sentence upon a first offender, the court should be required to consider a medical report. But Mr. Abse's Bill never had a chance.

Personally I think that any attempt to modify this law is deserving of support, even if it seems to be merely tinkering with the main issue. In this I am not at one with a good many other people who wish to see the law changed. The most tragic thing about what we call the democratic way of law-making seems to me to be that a crack-pot clause such as Labouchere's can get in in the small hours of the morning, when M.Ps. are tired out and want to get home, whereas it takes perhaps a century of campaigning—a century, too, of needless injustice and human suffering—to get that clause out again. I myself accept reluctantly the inevitability of this gradual way of undoing swiftly-done harm, and the perfect example of it seems to me to be the Homicide Act of 1957, which has reduced the operation of the law of murder to the status of a tragic farce, but which will inevitably lead on, and for the very reason that it is absurd, to the only common-sense solution, the abolition of the death penalty for murder. Meanwhile, the average number of hangings has gone down from thirteen a year to three or four. No serious student of legislation or modern social trends imagines that we shall ever go back to the law of murder as it was before 1957. And it will be the same with the law on homosexuality.

I spoke a minute or two ago about the position of a social worker entrusted with the confidences of a troubled homosexual client, and I said it was possible for such a person to be called as a witness in a court of law and compelled to give evidence, which of course means, in the last analysis, sent to prison for contempt if he refuses to speak. While this remains true, it is extremely difficult to tackle homosexuality as a social problem. You establish "worry clinics" and advice centres, at which the staff are not lawyers protected by the sanctity of the lawyer-client relationship. It may be said that the police would never subpoena a social worker to give such

evidence, and I rather think that is true. But a divorce solicitor might well do it, if it was the only way of getting evidence that he needed. And once the admissions have been made in open court, the police are unavoidably involved. Judges, too, have a way of ordering that such matters be brought to the notice of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

There is something in human nature (particularly in the English brand of it, it seems to me) that inhibits all rational behaviour in relationship to sexual questions, and it affects the official world as deeply as the unofficial world. Let me give you an example of the unofficial one in operation. On 24th May, 1954, I broadcast, as a kind of reporter, a long programme about the homosexual condition. I was asked to do it by the B.B.C. Mr. Kenneth Walker, our Chairman tonight, took part in the programme, and so did Lord Hailsham. Lord Hailsham spoke as the father of four boys and as a lawyer who had handled the criminal problem professionally. Mr. Brayshaw of the Marriage Guidance Council was in the programme, and so were Dr. Stafford-Clark and Mr. Claud Mullins, the former Metropolitan Magistrate, the late Canon Warner of the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, Dr. Roper, the Medical Officer of Wakefield Prison, and many others. The broadcast went out, and then came the truly staggering reaction. It staggered me, because I may have been a little naive about public reactions at that time. I had hundreds of letters, and it may have been thousands; I never really counted. They were addressed to me personally. A few of them were letters of utter despair from men who had thought that the broadcast might point the way to a change in the law more positively. But, as I say, I was a mere reporter. About 75 per cent of them were abusive, and they were of that peculiar poison-pen abusiveness that makes you wonder whether people are not driven into literary composition by an unconscious reverence for the fountain-pen as a kind of phallic symbol. I've got used to letters of this kind. I know, for example, that I may get some more as the result of a meeting like this, and they, if they come, will put Lady Chatterley right back in Square One. I don't believe for a moment that they represent anything significant in English life: they come from a sort of stuttering lunatic fringe that keeps for its bedside book the 18th Chapter of Leviticus. But they write less purple and more printable letters to the newspapers. I saw some the other day after the Bishop of Woolwich had committed the indiscretion of preaching a Christian sermon that was notable for its forgiveness and compassion. Whenever an attempt is made in Parliament to humanise this law about homosexuality, M.Ps are bound to get letters of this kind, because it is these biological cavemen who shout the loudest on such occasions.

When we do succeed in changing the law, leaving intact the protection of young people and public decency, we shall still have to cope

with homosexuals who seduce young people and who offend against public decency. Are we going to go on putting these into monastic prisons, which is like confining alcoholics in a brewery? Will the judges go on saying, as they do now, "Whether or not your condition can be cured I do not profess to know, but where you are going you will get expert medical treatment"? And will they ever learn that a man with a three- or four- or five-year sentence goes at least for the first eighteen months of his sentence to a crammed local prison where the medical staff and medical service is minimal and overwhelmed, and homosexuality is likely to be pretty rife anyway? I would not for a moment recommend that a homosexual offender should be segregated from other homosexual offenders, because it is becoming more and more clear that these men can help each other very greatly indeed in group discussion and in other similar ways; and in the strictest sense this may be no more a medical problem than non-attendance at church or membership of the Flat Earth Society. With rare exceptions that prove absolutely nothing, treatment will be useless if it is merely punitive, but it need be medical only in the sense that medicos do tend to know a lot about the functioning of the human brain, whether or not they announce the fact by acquiring diplomas in psychological medicine.

What lies before the reformers, then, is the moulding of public opinion. One could almost say the creation of public opinion, because between the vociferous extremes, the poison-pen chaps on one side and people like me talking in Conway Hall on the other side, lies the vast indifferent mass of people who seldom give the subject a serious thought, and this largely inert mass has been exposed to the insidious effects of the Labouchere Amendment ever since 1885. What the law says must, for the busy man, be assumed to be right. I have heard people say that. Voltaire said "it takes ages to destroy a popular opinion". We can see, therefore, that public opinion, when it comes to law-making, is created in two ways. Either you educate public opinion to the point of demanding the change (as in the anti-slavery campaign), or where it puts up with the change (as in the case of Income Tax increases), or you change the law without consulting public opinion at all, as was done in the case of that tremendous change in English law, the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, on which the electorate was never asked for a view at any moment. Parliament did a lot of this in the nineteenth century, when nearly all our present statutes were passed into law and there weren't very many voters to worry about. Legislators did not bother much, then, about public opinion and the popular mandate. My belief is that it can still be done now, and that if you can pass a law like this one in 1885 without a word of debate, and set up a regime that is going to send thousands of men to prison for doing what, until then, was never punished by the law, then we ought to be at least as ready now to pass a law that will lift this shadow from their lives, and

having passed it we should have forged the supreme instrument for the fashioning of public opinion.

Let me end, if I may, with the luxury of self-quotation—the revival of the very words I used at the close of that broadcast in 1954, which were quoted angrily in a high proportion of the vitriolic letters I received afterwards:

> "There's an urgent need for a new and courageous and unfurtive attitude on the part of us all, as parents, guardians, teachers and counsellors of that legion of boys and girls who may stand condemned as, I speak now and you listen, to unsatisfactory lives in a borderland between wretched frustration and complete fulfilment."

I would only add to that a plea that our legislators should think now upon the same lines.

Q: What efforts are being made by the Homosexual Law Reform Society to influence public opinion through the Press and broadcasting?

MR. ROLPH: Well, either the B.B.C or Independent Television are constantly ringing up and saying they're *contemplating* doing a programme on this subject, but it seldom seems to come to anything —I don't quite know why. I think that there is an actual state of contemplation going on now in one or other of those organisations. Special efforts to influence the Press seem to me to be useless unless they coincide with some specific occasion, such as the appearance of a Private Member's Bill or some particularly outrageous case of prosecution that is quite needless. What is better is a regular and steady flow of letters to the Press.

MR. GREY: Editors are of course their own censors, and they all have their own views on this subject. I think that one can perhaps over-estimate the influence of the national Press, but where we have got a very fertile ground which a lot of our sympathisers could cultivate themselves is in the local Press. You often get very useful and interesting and intelligent correspondence going on in local newspapers, and I do suggest to you that it is very worthwhile to start a correspondence or keep up a correspondence in local newspapers.

Q: Mr. Rolph has said a thing which is said quite frequently, and I'd like to know whether any research has gone into this to back it up—that altering the law with regard to consenting adults in private would decrease the amount of public indecency?

MR. ROLPH: Well, I was basing that largely on information that I got by word of mouth and by correspondence from people like Professor Lindemann in Denmark, and the man who runs the Horstedwester Prison, who have watched the effect of this alleviation of the laws in their own country, and they've been quite

convinced that the amount both of solicitation and importuning had decreased—visibly decreased, and also, in the case of Denmark, statistically decreased. There were less prosecutions, and less convictions, and so on. I should think that logic is on the side of this proposition.

MR. NEWALL: If you give people a chance to behave in a legal manner they will be more inclined to take it. At present the penalties for behaviour in public are the same as for behaviour in private, so there is no incentive for people who might be tempted.

MR. GREY: Well, I think quite illogically they're often less, because you get the sort of bye-law cases where the maximum penalty is a £5 fine.

MR. NEWALL: In this context, our own experience in the Society has been that for many of the cases we have dealt with, the risks involved in private have been greater than those involved in public behaviour.

Q: Would it not be possible to get more publicity if more vigorous steps were taken?

MR GREY: The Homosexual Law Reform Society possesses a very active and concerned Executive Committee which meets frequently and has long discussions on every possible aspect of influencing public opinion and making progress with the reform. There is a season in these things, and to get publicity one needs a "news point". The original news point in our own campaign, as I expect you remember, was about eight or nine years ago when some rather sensational trials led to the appointment of the Wolfenden Committee. Then, when the report came out, there was a great deal of Press publicity for it, most of which was favourable, or at any rate very evenly balanced. There were two national public opinion polls taken, which showed in both cases just under 50 per cent of people actively favouring reform at that time. It was a very open question indeed whether something would not be done about it quite quickly, but in all these matters it is the Government and the people at the very top who have the final say. Parliament is an important sounding-board for public opinion and the opinion of M.Ps, but in the end it is the Minister who decides whether the thing should be done or not.

Mr. Butler decided against implementing the Report, and consequently nearly all the public interest and newspaper readiness to print correspondence and articles evaporated. Since then we've been living through a comparatively lean time. When we founded the Society, there was hope that a fairly rapid reform might follow, and great numbers of letters and articles appeared in many newspapers which now look on homosexual law reform as rather stale news.

There has been a very interesting book just published* on the campaign for the abolition of the death penalty, which shows how people in that cause made prodigious efforts, and in fact won two free votes in the House of Commons, and still didn't succeed in getting the law changed. It always seems to me very ironical that that law, which, as Mr. Rolph said, now directly affects only three lives a year, gets so much effort and so much publicity, arousing so much emotion on both sides, while homosexuality, which affects literally thousands of people every year, in the courts as well as outside them, is a much harder subject to drum into public conciousness.

MR. NEWALL: First of all, I must say a very warm "thank you" to Mr. Rolph. I have read much that he has written with the greatest admiration, but I have never heard him speak before, except on the wireless, and tonight was an opportunity I would not have missed.

My wife and I are leaving the Albany Trust in about a fortnight, and so I would like to say a little bit about what has been happening during our time as Secretaries, in so far as that affects the future. We first came to this Society nearly four years ago, just after we were married. We were looking round for some organisation in which we believed, for whom we could go and do some voluntary work. After about a year, we were asked to take over as Secretaries, and we came at a discouraging time. Kenneth Robinson's motion had just been rejected by the House of Commons. We received discouraging reports of the Home Office attitude, and we received discouraging reports about the atmosphere in the House of Commons and the House of Lords—an official attitude that has never been paralleled by our own experience in addressing meetings elsewhere, when we have met with no hostility whatsoever.

Our successor is coming on to the field at what is still a discouraging time. I think it will be some while before there is any active move in Parliament to change the law, and this is discouraging for the Secretary of the Society, as well as for the supporters. We are sometimes asked, what are we doing? Well, what we are doing, of course, is to influence the people who make the laws, and I question whether any gimmick or rally of support will influence them in the right direction. The people who are responsible for that sort of thing are rather conservative (I mean conservative with a small "c"), and they have to be won round by hard work at convincing them.

I think they will be. If you have read the debates on this subject, you will know that there is a fairly strong body of opinion who will not accept the change now, but say they would accept it some time in the future. Meantime, quite a lot can be done without an

* J. B. Christoph: *Capital Punishment and British Politics.* George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1962. 25s.

actual change in the law. Reform can come in social attitudes without any direct lead from the Government. We don't have to be led by the Government to think in a specific way, and any portion of the community that can be persuaded to revise its hostile attitude towards homosexuals represents progress. We can also work for a better attitude on the part of homosexuals towards the community. You may say that that's putting things the wrong way round, because the homosexuals are the people who are offended against—but nevertheless, a more sensible relationship between the two parts of society can come about even before the law is changed. Legal change would help, I know, but I'm told that in Germany there has been a high degree of social acceptance of homosexuals for a long time, although the law there is very much the same as it is here.

This series of meetings was arranged with a view to getting together a smallish group of people who were really interested in this subject, and who would take the trouble to learn what can be done towards help of one sort or another—help of homosexuals by homosexuals, and help of homosexuals by the community at large. I do hope that those of you who come to the future meetings will feel that you are getting somewhere through them and that we are building a compact body of people who really believe in what both the Trust and the Society are trying to do.

Mr. Rolph has given us a most splendid send-off to the series. He has been quite remarkably lucid and reasonable on the subject. One can't go to a bookstall these days without seeing a new book either written or edited by Mr. Rolph, and one can hardly switch the wireless on without hearing him. I think there's at least something to be said for a community which gives such a good platform to someone with such extremely well-balanced and lucid views.

II

DR. W. LINDESAY NEUSTATTER:

Sexual Deviation from the Psychiatric Standpoint

DR. ALEX COMFORT (*in the Chair*): It is a pleasure to introduce our speaker tonight, Dr. Lindesay Neustatter, Deputy-Chairman of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, who is a consultant psychiatrist, a teacher, and a clinician. He is consultant to a number of London hospitals, and has written and worked extensively on the subject about which he is going to address us.

DR. NEUSTATTER: My subject this evening is the sexual deviations, but in view of the auspices under which this lecture is being given I shall devote most of my time to the problems connected with homosexuality. Moreover, from the point of view of law reform, it is that we are interested in, because the other paraphilias are either not breaches of the law at all, or they are very insignificant breaches—at least, the punishment is comparatively insignificant. The exposurist and the fetishist are usually dealt with leniently. Admittedly they are occasionally sent to prison (the latter generally only for stealing the desired articles of clothing), but there certainly is not the prejudice that there is about homosexuality. Sadism, of course, in its severe forms, if it leads to murder, naturally comes within the purview of the law, but it is fortunately extremely rare in this form, and unlike the other offences is self-evidently harmful.

There are a diversity of sexual deviations, but Wilhelm Stekel, a famous Viennese psychoanalyst, very rightly differentiated between homosexuality, in which the element of love for another person exists, and the other sexual deviations which are merely a form of sensual gratification. He, incidentally, objected to the word perversion—I think very rightly, because it has such a very unpleasant connotation—and introduced the descriptive term 'paraphilia'. He also said that it was only a true paraphilia if the abnormal method of obtaining sexual satisfaction replaced the normal heterosexual end; if it was merely a stimulus, or foreplay, it was not a fully-developed paraphilia. So on the one side there is homosexuality, and on the other there are sadism, masochism, fetishism, exhibitionism, and a few other very rare paraphilias such as

necrophilia, which one practically never comes across—though I remember a ghastly case of cannibalism was recorded in America of a man whose sexual perversion (I really do think one could call it that in this instance) took the form of killing children and eating them. He finally became overtly insane, and was probably an unrecognised schizophrenic throughout.

The psychopathology of the paraphilias has got a great deal in common, with the possible exception of the 100 per cent homosexual. Freud referred to the child as a "polymorphous pervert"—not a term which goes down very well with fond parents!—and just as the embryo passes through various stages of development, he postulated that various phases of sexual development are passed through before puberty and full heterosexual maturity are reached. Therefore, if the sexual instinct gets arrested at one of these different stages, the corresponding paraphilia occurs. This certainly fits in with the psychopathology of homosexuality, because it is well-known that during adolescence both boys and girls have homosexual interests, whether they are merely platonic crushes or whether they have overt sexual expression. Stekel had an added theory which appeals to me very much: that the homosexual was someone who had felt rebuffed by his mother, and therefore developed a hatred for women, and consequently his feelings of love were turned towards the father and on to his own sex.

To understand homosexuality, one must start off by saying that it is not an illness or a disease, but that it is a variant. Kinsey emphasised that there is a scale on which some people rate as 100 per cent heterosexual at one end, and some as 100 per cent homosexual at the other, with grades of bisexuality in between. The reason for saying that it is not a disease or an illness is that the majority of people who are homosexual show nothing else that would differentiate them from heterosexuals. It is a question of semantics to some extent—of what terminology you are using. Personally I put it thus: Is having brown eyes a disease or having blue eyes a disease? Or is neither a disease, but simply a variation? Certain suggestions have been put forward that there may be glandular factors at work. There are rare cases known of people with super-renal rumours who physically changed their sex, and whose sexual inclinations changed too, but these cases are so rare that they really have very little bearing on the subject.

Homosexuals have no particular innate characteristics any more than heterosexuals have, and it is important to make people realise that, apart from his sexual preference, the homosexual is in other ways completely normal. Some people believe that homosexuals are physically effeminate. But Clifford Allen, among others, has made bodily measurements and is firmly of the opinion that there is nothing in this idea at all. There is no definite difference in body measurements; homosexuals have not, for instance, got broader pelves or feminine hips. Any apparent femininity is in the manner-

isms, and sometimes in the mode of dressing which particular individuals may adopt. Some of the passive homosexuals have the most magnificent masculine physiques.

From the point of view of prejudice, it is very important to distinguish between the psychopath—the constitutionally unstable individual, whose homosexuality is merely one facet of an abnormal personality—and the vast majority of homosexuals who have not got abnormal personalities. They may, of course, develop unusual characteristics, but that is a sociological effect. If people feel that they are ostracised and looked askance upon by society in general, it naturally very easily leads to them becoming seclusive, and sometimes to acquiring an apparent superiority—which is a well-known compensating mechanism not peculiar to homosexuals. It is surely natural, in the circumstances, for homosexuals to wish to keep together and seek their own society.

One of the things that seems to cause the public alarm is acts of indecency in public lavatories. But quite clearly, nothing happens to heterosexuals, who, to the best of my knowledge, are never approached in such places because homosexuals recognise that they are not interested. There is particular prejudice about what the law calls "the abominable act" of buggery. The idea that homosexuals who indulge in this are somehow more degenerate than the ones who do not is complete nonsense. They are no different. Unless you are told by a homosexual whether that particular type of sexual satisfaction appeals to him, you would not know; nor could you, if you do not know he is homosexual, differentiate him from anybody else. It is psychologically interesting why such enormous prejudice exists on this subject. Why, for example, was it regarded as so serious that the death penalty was attached to it, and now a life sentence can still be awarded, so that only capital murder carries a more severe punishment? It is extremely difficult to find anything logical in this. It might be thought it was because it was considered unhygienic, but the prejudice goes far back into centuries where hygienic considerations could not be relevant.

Homosexuals can be subdivided into the complete, the partial, the active, or the passive, but I do not know that there is anything very useful in these divisions. But there is an important *social* differentiation between those who are interested in other adults, and the paedophiliacs who are interested in youths and children. The paedophiliacs, of course, do present a particular problem, and a socially important one. If a paedophiliac has relations with a youngster, courts are always particularly concerned that the boy might have been suborned or perverted by what has been done. In some cases, the answer is that no real harm will result, because the boy is already himself completely homosexual, and has never had anything but homosexual impulses from a very young age. Then there is the boy who is so heterosexually normal that the experience is unlikely to have any very great effect. But of course,

there is the in-between case of the youngster who is balanced between heterosexuality and homosexuality who may be swung over to homosexuality, and this shift may clearly be harmful. This argument is not based on prejudice against homosexuality, but because very many homosexuals are extremely unhappy at their lot, and wish they could live ordinary lives with wives and families like heterosexual people can. So it is highly undesirable that anyone should be swung in this direction, if he would not have followed it otherwise.

The psychology of the paedophiliac is interesting. This too falls into three classes. First, there are those who are extremely guilty about what they do. I remember a tragic case some years ago of a clergyman I was trying to treat who had overweening impulses to assault small boys sexually, and had the strongest moral feeling about how wrong this was. I was treating him for a severe anxiety state, because his life was a perpetual struggle with these impulses. I do not know what happened to him in the end; I always have a horrible feeling he may have committed suicide, because at that time there was nothing very much that could be done to curb his impulses. Next there are those who quite honestly can see nothing wrong. They will say (which is quite true) that they neither force nor pay the lad; that they are genuinely fond of the youths with whom they have relations, and that, while they realise, of course, that this is illegal, they cannot see, to their way of thinking, that there is anything morally wrong. Many are very conscientious, kindly men, and it is a very tragic situation. Then there is the third group, who seem completely devoid of any scruples and are absolutely incorrigible. They will serve a prison sentence, and then go straight off and find a job in some school or organisation for boys and start their practices again. I do not think there is any question that this is just as undesirable as it would be for a schoolmaster or schoolmistress to interfere sexually with girls. They are quite extraordinary people—some of them most amazing hypocrites. I remember one man with these proclivities whom some psychiatrist had taken on for treatment and was about to discharge as very successfully cured, when he discovered that every weekend the man had hired a car, gone to a neighbouring village and taken a whole bevy of small boys out and assaulted them. And then, to cap it all, when he had assaulted the boys, he said: "I did this to you to show you how disgusting it is, so that you don't grow up like me"! Of course, such very pathological cases are quite rare, but even a few of them can cause the type of publicity, when they are before the courts, which does incalculable harm from the point of view of trying to reform the law.

What of the treatment of the paraphilias, and homosexuality in particular? Success will depend on a variety of factors, one of the most important being the presence of normal sexuality. Quite a number of paraphiliacs, including the bisexuals, can have normal

heterosexual intercourse with varying degrees of satisfaction. In such cases the cause is probably largely psychological, in that inhibitions early in life have at least in part frightened the subject off ordinary sexuality. If these inhibitions can be removed—no easy task, however—then normal sensuality can replace more immature forms, though in my experience the paraphiliac tendencies only become overlain: they do not pass away completely, and they reassert themselves in times of emotional stress. For the complete homosexual, whose sexual impulses have always been directed solely towards his own sex from his earliest days—and they are usually very early days—psychotherapy is to all intents and purposes of no avail. And although very little is yet known about the glands or about inherent physical causes, I think there may well be some strong constitutional factor here, and that we are not dealing with a psychological disorder.

Law courts, it should be noted, are not directly concerned with a cure, but only with the law's requirement that the act should not be repeated. *Being* homosexual is not an offence; it is only an offence for males to perform homosexual acts, and anything that can be done to try and prevent the offender getting into trouble again is what interests the court. Here, what I might call moral organisations—probation officers, clergymen, anybody who can assist the patient in controlling himself—come into play. During the Parliamentary debates over the Street Offences Act, a Minister remarked that it was no use trying to stamp out prostitution, because one could not legislate contrary to human nature, or words to that effect. He was referring to the heterosexual impulse; I wondered why it was that the wretched homosexual is supposed to be able to have so much more self-control that the heterosexual? The heterosexual, after all, has at any rate got the prospect of having legalised sexual relations when he marries, which the homosexual never has.

What can be done in the way of treatment is to many homosexuals a very second-rate offer. That is, merely to try and help them to adapt to their lot. Yet both psychiatry and a great deal of medicine have nothing more to offer: there are many disorders for which nothing better than this can be done. But to make a person bear his situation and find it more tolerable is quite a worthwhile achievement.

And so to conclude I would say the real answer lies in getting the law changed. Then one will not be faced with this impossible task of trying to change the sexual drive in those who do not want it changed, and we can concentrate on the hard enough task of trying to do so in those who want such a change.

Q: Dr. Neustatter, you mentioned Dr. Clifford Allen. Some time ago he had several letters in the Press, as a result of which I wrote to him. I gathered from his quite lengthy reply that he did

not seem to believe in the true biological homosexual. What are your views on that?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I wouldn't agree with him on that point.

Q: Is it not a psychological axiom that a man tends to condemn in others the things he is secretly afraid of in himself? Would it not be fair to say in that case that the majority of these peppery old colonels and retired officers who write fierce letters condemning the homosexual have these repressed tendencies themselves?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I think there are some cases in which one might conclude "The gentleman doth protest too much, methinks". But in other cases it is just that any ideas the fiery old colonels haven't assimilated fifty years ago strike them as outrageous. I think it is a dangerous argument to say that all opposition is due to repressed homosexuality, because this is the kind of pleading which ends up by dismissing *every* opponent by saying "You're merely arguing out of prejudice".

Q: On the question of mother-fixated homosexuals, if it were true that certain men are born or constitutionally have a number of the characteristics which are normally called (in our civilisation at least) feminine, could not that be the cause, rather than the result, of their affinity with the mother? It is always assumed, you see, that if a man is very fond of his mother and is a homosexual, his homosexuality is due to his being close to his mother. But could it not be the other way round?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I agree with you that it *could* be; whether it is, I would not be dogmatic enough to say.

Q: In the case of apparent heterosexuals who are prepared to have sexual relations with homosexuals for money or other gain, are those people actually always bisexual? Or can the 100 per cent heterosexual force himself, because of the reward at the end, to have such relationships?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Well, I think I would say that there are two groups. There are the definite bisexuals—those who have genuine interests in both directions. But the ones who do it solely for gain may not be homosexual at all.

Q: Dr. Neustatter, from the cases that come before you, what would you say are the most common troubles of homosexuals—depression, or persecution complexes, or what?

DR. NEUSTATTER: You see all forms. Anxiety, I suppose, is the commonest—it is an intolerable position for a decent, respectable man who happens to have had homosexual relations to realise that

he has in fact placed himself outside the law, and could if he was unlucky be caught and severely punished for it. Linked up with that is depression, sometimes resulting in suicide. Persecutory ideas can occur, sometimes on a basis of fact, or as part of a schizophrenic illness.

Q: Many people are under the impression that if they have homosexual relations, they are not liable to catch venereal disease. Should they not have some enlightenment on this subject?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Certainly venereal disease can be spread by homosexuals as well as by heterosexuals. As regards treatment, the venereal clinics are supposed to be completely confidential.

DR. COMFORT: I'm slightly suspicious myself whether these people would be inclined to come along to venereal clinics.

MR. GREY: I think the thing is very much complicated by the fact that technically, a doctor is an accessory after the fact if he knows a felony has been committed and he doesn't report it to the authorities; and even though in fact this would very rarely happen, there is always a fear in the back of people's minds that one day it could happen, or might happen.

DR. NEUSTATTER: I think the medical profession would take the view that in a matter like that it would not be our business to indulge in a breach of professional confidence, which is a very serious matter. The danger lies more in notes being subpoenaed by courts for some reason, in consequence of which some doctors deliberately refrain from writing down what might be incriminating material. I have never heard of a doctor being regarded as an accessory after the fact.

DR. COMFORT: Is there not the risk of the occasional medical zealot who thinks "Well, this chap is a menace anyway", and who both disapproves of his conduct and thinks there is a good reason for turning him in because he is infected? If it were my case, I think I should be a bit anxious about going to the doctor about it.

DR. NEUSTATTER: I think the doctor would put himself in a dangerously invidious position. Turning the man in for venereal disease would lay him open to an action for damages.

MR. GREY: The argument has been quite seriously advanced by opponents of law reform that we should keep the law as it is, because fear of the law makes people seek treatment. But from talking to people with these difficulties, I get the strong impression that the exact opposite is the truth, and that in fact people are

made far more afraid of going for treatment by the law than they otherwise would be.

DR. NEUSTATTER: I find it hard to answer this; I think embarrassment on the one hand, and the feeling that their sexuality is their own affair and not an illness needing treatment on the other, is what chiefly keeps people away. The lack of privacy in hospital out-patients is a source of embarrassment to some.

Q: Has Dr. Neustatter noticed any growing tendency on the part of magistrates or judges to refer defendants to a psychiatrist before sentencing them?

DR. NEUSTATTER: My impression is that there has been a distinct change in courts' attitudes. I can think of two cases I was concerned with, both homosexuals who had never been anything else and who had been in quite a lot of trouble, both of whom were bound over. A while ago, I am quite sure they would have gone to prison.

Q: What does the "treatment" prescribed by the courts involve? Does it include injections—hormones, and all that sort of thing?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I think that treatment by male hormones (for men) is of no use whatever, and what figures there are about it show that what the hormones do is to increase the sexual drive.

DR. COMFORT: People have used oestrogens, haven't they, to suppress it? But that is a form of medical castration rather than a therapy to alter the direction.

DR. NEUSTATTER: Yes, it doesn't alter the direction, it merely reduces the sexual impulse.

MR. GREY: I believe that sometimes it brings about biological changes too, doesn't it?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Well, mammary fat may increase, and there is a very small risk of mammary cancer arising as a result of it. Patients also put on weight, and long administration can cause degenerative changes in the testes.

Q: Do they have to have these injections against their wishes?

DR. NEUSTATTER: They are not injections, they are pills taken by mouth. It's rather complicated; if they are put on probation with a condition of treatment, they are asked by the court whether they will agree. The court cannot order the patient to take a

particular medicine. I suppose that if the doctor said stilboestrol was essential, and the patient declined to take it, he could be reported for breach of probation.

MR. GREY: Surely "treatment" prescribed as a result of a court order is not always a physical treatment or a medical treatment? It is a psychological treatment quite often? I mean that if someone is put on probation on condition that they undergo treatment, this does not necessarily mean taking any medicine?

DR. COMFORT: It could be psychotherapy or psychoanalysis in some shape or form?

DR. NEUSTATTER: In the case of a bisexual it should be psychological treatment—an attempt to remove the inhibitions that keep him back from heterosexuality. But again the court merely orders *treatment*, though it may ask the doctor what kind of treatment he envisages; and if it is psychological treatment, with some judges it can be a mighty difficult answer to get across!

Q: I notice in the Kinsey Report that although a fair number of men were reported to dabble in homosexual practices, only four per cent persisted throughout life. Doesn't that suggest that many of what are claimed as "cures" by the psychologists are heterosexuals who would have grown out of their habits in any case if they weren't treated?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Yes, I think that is quite possible, though I think treatment may hasten the process, and sometimes cause a swing to heterosexuality which otherwise would not have occurred; but you have put your finger on something—it is a headache throughout medicine, as I'm sure the Chairman will agree, as to whether when you are treating a condition its improvement is a coincidence or whether it is cause and effect.

Q: Dr. Neustatter, you have really suggested there isn't a treatment for homosexuality at all. But you said also that you thought it might be a question of arrested development. Would there not be a cure in trying to hasten the development?

DR. NEUSTATTER: That is really the aim of psychoanalysis—to try and overcome those inhibitions which have arrested development, and then allow the development to proceed. In theory it's excellent, but in practice is is extremely difficult to effect. With bisexuals a certain amount of success can be obtained. But I do not think that the man or woman who has been completely homosexual from the word "go" is amenable to psychological treatment.

Q: I've often heard it suggested that a symptom of homosexuality is excessive promiscuity. Would you say that that was

merely due to the law being as it is, to environment, and difficulties of finding sexual satisfaction, or is it actually a symptom of homosexuality?

DR. NEUSTATTER: No, I would say your first explanation was the correct one—sexual impulse rather thrives on difficulties, and the more it is obstructed the more tempting it becomes. You can see the same with heterosexuals. Incidentally, the man who is exceedingly promiscuous is sometimes the man who is really rather undersexed, who has got to keep on proving himself all the time. I certainly don't think promiscuity is an inevitable characteristic of homosexuality.

Q: Is there any evidence that homosexuality is hereditary?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Well, it can't be *directly* hereditary, for obvious reasons, if it is complete homosexuality! Kallmann's experiments with identical and binovular twins would suggest some constitutional element. He compared sets of these twins where one twin was homosexual, and found that there was far more homosexuality in the other twin when they were identical than when they were merely brothers born at the same time. But a good deal of people dispute his figures, so I refer to them with some hesitation.

I think in illness you have got to presuppose some constitutional element—you are always faced with the fact that two people brought up in the same family in much the same environment turn out completely different, so one must suppose that there is something inherently different in them, and that it is not all environment. I always say that in psychiatry, one could compose a formula that "constitution × environment = a constant". The greater the constitutional weighting, the less environment it needs to disturb and upset the individual, and vice versa. That doesn't only apply to sexuality—I think you could apply it throughout medicine.

Q: Dr. Neustatter, is there a higher degree of nervous debility amongst homosexuals than amongst heterosexuals?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I could not give you figures, but I think there is, because obviously they are living under far greater difficulties than the heterosexual.

Q: I once heard a quite highly-placed clergyman confidently state that he considered a homosexual man to be basically a man in love with himself. Would you like to comment on that statement from the point of view of psychology?

DR. NEUSTATTER: I should have thought that was oversimplification—it is really accusing him of narcissism, isn't it? One might as well say the heterosexual is in love with the feminine

component in his own make-up. What do such explanations mean anyway?

MR. GREY: There was rather an interesting article in *The Yorkshire Post* a week or two ago, which was discussing why there was still such a high degree of social hostility to homosexuals in this country, and it made the point that this stems from ancient Jewish and other religious superstitions, and finished up by saying in effect that it was really almost emotionally necessary for a complex and disturbed society such as our own to have a small and fairly identifiable group of scapegoats whom it could comfort its own conscience by pursuing every now and then with a hue and cry. Do you think this is a psychologically sound hypothesis?

DR. NEUSTATTER: Yes, I think the herd dislikes anything which it thinks is different from itself—and I emphasise the "think", because Kinsey's figures show that a great deal of the herd is not so different!

III

KENNETH ROBINSON, M.P.:

Parliament and the Wolfenden Report

MR. C. H. ROLPH (*in the Chair*) : Tonight we are especially fortunate in having Mr. Kenneth Robinson, M.P., to speak on the recent history of the efforts that have been made to effect this change in the law, and the machinery that is involved. Mr. Robinson is the ideal man to talk to us on this subject. His special interest is public health in the widest possible sense of that phrase, and he has taken a leading part in tackling some of the overdue reforms in this field which most politicians are traditionally reluctant to tackle—such questions as the laws relating to suicide and abortion, as well as those connected with homosexuality. He is certainly not the man to be frightened or put off or deflected by such difficulties as there may be in bringing about the amendment we are seeking in this branch of the Criminal Law.

MR. ROBINSON : Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I think it is generally agreed that in Britain we enjoy the most fully developed form of democratic government in the world. The House of Commons is, perhaps more than any other legislative assembly, a truly representative body. Its membership reflects the views and opinions, the hopes and the fears, the prejudices and the inhibitions of those whom it represents. Parliament gathers from this mirror reflection much of its strength and some of its weaknesses, and among the latter is an ingrained fear of legislating ahead, or too far ahead, of public opinion. This is not to say that Governments and Parliaments are not frequently compelled to take decisions which conflict with what is assumed to be mass opinion, but they are almost always political decisions.

It is in the field of socially controversial legislation, where party politics hardly enter, where the issues involve moral and ethical considerations and may touch on sex or religious belief, that Parliamentary inertia is most noticeable. Thus it is that on this limited front, embracing such matters as homosexuality, abortion, Sunday observance, and—until recently, at any rate—suicide and obscene libel, our laws are oddly illiberal compared with those of many other countries, especially in view of our generally enlightened

very stringent indeed. But not so in 1885. And so Mr. Labouchere got up and moved his amendment, explaining that whereas under existing law the type of assault that his amendment dealt with was an offence only if it was committed upon a person under the age of 13, his object was to make the law applicable to any person, whether under or over the age of 13. He gave no further explanation, and he added that he understood Her Majesty's Government were willing to accept his amendment. Only two other backbenchers spoke; one of them made an irrelevant observation, and the other moved to increase the maximum penalty from one year's imprisonment to two years, to which Mr. Labouchere offered no objection. Without a single word on behalf of the Government, the clause was agreed to without a division, and added to the Bill. The entire proceedings occupied precisely one column of *Hansard.* Four days later the House of Lords considered the Commons' amendments to the Bill en bloc, in a very short debate, in the course of which no reference of any kind was made to the Labouchere amendment. Indeed, I think it is extremely doubtful if either Parliament or the Government were aware of the very substantial change they had effected in the law of homosexuality.

This was, of course, the offence with which ten years later Oscar Wilde was charged and convicted. For more than half a century afterwards, Parliament, Press and public seemed generally content to leave the law as it stood. The annual number of prosecutions waxed and waned, perhaps more according to the zeal shown by the authorities from time to time than to any great variation in the incidence of homosexual practices. Whenever, as happened on occasions, a public figure was charged, the scandal was fully exploited in the Press, but seldom, if ever, gave rise to any serious discussion of the problem, or of the law. Even the steady growth in the understanding of the nature of sexual deviation seems hardly to have called in question the appropriateness of the law's treatment of homosexuality.

This was the position well into the period following the Second World War. Then, towards the end of 1953, two or three Members of Parliament tabled questions to the Home Secretary asking for this law to be reconsidered. About the same time the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, which had set up a committee to look into this problem, produced a report making a similar demand. Suddenly the subject ceased to be taboo, and there followed a good deal of serious discussion in the Press, mostly advocating reform. The Home Secretary, at that time Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe (who is now Lord Kilmuir), clearly felt he had to do something in the face of this mounting pressure, and he took the favourite escape route of Governments in that kind of a difficulty—he agreed to set up a committee.

He took, however, the somewhat strange step of inviting the same committee to inquire into both homosexuality and prostitution,

since there was a parallel agitation in progress about the alleged increase in prostitution on the streets of London. Few people seem to have shared what must have been the Home Secretary's view, namely, that the two problems were somehow analogous. The Wolfenden Committee was set up on the 24th August, 1954, and was asked to consider: (a) the law and practice relating to homosexual offences, and the treatment of persons convicted of such offences by the courts; and (b) the law and practice relating to offences against the criminal law in connection with prostitution and solicitation for immoral purposes.

The committee comprised, in addition to its Chairman, Sir John Wolfenden, the Vice-Chancellor of Reading University, twelve members drawn from the law, from medicine (including psychiatry), from the Church, from both Houses of Parliament, and from the lay public. They held 62 meetings over three years, heard evidence from a large number of bodies and individuals, and their report to the Home Secretary was published in September, 1957. As is well known, they recommended to the Government a tightening up of the law relating to prostitution and the keeping of brothels, increased penalties for street offences and the introduction of a formal method of cautioning prostitutes. On homosexuality they made a number of recommendations, by far the most important of which was that homosexual behaviour between consenting adults in private should no longer be a criminal offence. One member out of the thirteen dissented, and four other members wanted to go further than the main report in the direction of liberalising the law.

The considerations which led the committee to their major recommendation are, I think, best summed up in paragraph 61 of the report, which goes straight to the heart of the matter:

> "Unless a deliberate attempt is to be made by society, acting through the agency of the law, to equate the sphere of crime with that of sin, there must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business. To say this is not to condone or to encourage private immorality. On the contrary, to emphasise the personal and private nature of moral or immoral conduct is to emphasise the personal and private responsibility of the individual for his own actions, and that is a responsibility which a mature agent can properly be expected to carry for himself without the threat of punishment from the law."

This argument in favour of amending the law the committee found decisive.

Prominent spokesmen from the Churches have of course drawn the same distinction between crime and sin, particularly in discussing the subject of homosexuality. Now, this distinction which the committee drew between private and public morality has been strongly challenged, amongst other people by a judge, Lord Justice Devlin, who referred to it in his lecture on *The Enforcement of Morals*.*

* British Academy Maccabean Lecture on Jurisprudence, read 18th March, 1959. Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.

But the committee supported their recommendations with other practical arguments, and in the discussion of their report it was generally conceded that they had made out a formidable case for reform. Comment on the report in the Press, on radio and television was extensive, and largely sympathetic, and the stage appeared to be set for Government action.

But the Government showed little inclination for a debate on the report, and they cited as one excuse for delay the need to allow public opinion to form and to crystallize. Indeed, no less than fourteen months elapsed between the publication of the report and the first House of Commons debate, in November, 1958, and on that occasion the Government were very careful to ensure that no vote was taken. The opening speech of the Home Secretary, who by this time was Mr. R. A. Butler, soon made it clear that no early initiative to implement the recommendations on homosexuality could be expected of Her Majesty's Government. Whilst he broadly accepted the Wolfenden Committee's arguments, Mr. Butler expressed fears that a change in the law of the kind proposed might be misunderstood by many people as an official condonation of homosexual conduct. We must have regard, he said, for those outside the influence of religion, for whom the criminal law provided the sole yardstick of right or wrong. General opinion, he concluded, felt that it would be doing too much to condone a practice which so many people abhorred. Mr. Butler then moved with some relief to the firmer ground of Part III of the report, which dealt with prostitution. There the recommendations found somewhat more favour with the Government.

The debate that followed his speech suffered inevitably from a lack of cohesion and continuity through having to deal with two such disparate subjects. Most members confined their speeches to one of them, and of those who chose to discuss the section of the report dealing with homosexuality, roughly half supported the recommendations and half opposed them. The House of Commons includes two members who practise, or at least have practised, psychiatry. Both of them came down uncompromisingly against reform. On the other hand, both spokesmen from the Opposition front bench, although speaking as individual members, and not on this occasion committing the Labour Party as such, strongly favoured the Wolfenden Committee's recommendations. Winding up the debate for the Government, the Under-Secretary for Home Affairs went somewhat further than Mr. Butler had gone in stating that the Government believed it to be "the instinct of most members of the public and of most members of both Houses of Parliament to decline the Wolfenden proposal". The House was content to "take note of" the Wolfenden Report.

So far as the Commons was concerned that was the end of the matter for the time being, though in the following session the Government introduced a more stringent law relating to prostitu-

tion, which met, incidentally, strong opposition on both sides of the House. Little more was heard of the recommendations on homosexuality for more than eighteen months. Then it so happened that in June, 1960, I was lucky in the ballot for Private Members' motions, and I decided to introduce a motion inviting the House of Commons to accept the Wolfenden recommendations. It seemed to me that the time had come for the House to take a decision one way or the other on a matter which is, after all, of considerable social importance. Now, on these sorts of occasion a Member's postbag is quite instructive, as long as one doesn't regard the contents as a kind of miniature Gallup Poll. After all, the great majority of citizens would never think of writing to their Member of Parliament on a public issue, as opposed to a private problem, and one must at all times remember that the expressions of view in letters to Members of Parliament are those of probably an atypical minority. Nevertheless, one might have expected that the initiation of a debate designed to reform the law on homosexuality would stimulate the opponents of such a move to protest on a noticeable scale. In fact, only a small minority of the letters I received—less than one in four—were hostile, and many of these were grossly abusive, obscene, or anonymous, or all three. Nearly all of them, incidentally, were written *after* the debate. Of the letters I had in support, about half of them, at a rough guess, came from homosexuals, many of whom wrote in moving terms of the sense of isolation and despair brought about by the existing law. The only common feature of the rest of them was an apparent desire to express support for, and if possible to be identified with, an attempt to remove what they clearly regarded as a major injustice.

On this occasion the debate was a shorter one, because there are limitations on Private Members' time. It lasted three hours, which permitted eleven speeches—five from the Government side of the House and six from the Opposition benches. The terms of my motion were, quite simply, that "this House calls upon Her Majesty's Government to take early action upon the recommendations contained in Part II of the Report of the Wolfenden Committee." With one exception, every Opposition speaker supported the motion, and every Conservative speaker, without exception, opposed it. More than one of them went so far to suggest that a change of law was inevitable, perhaps even desirable, but they boggled at the word "early" in the call for Government action. Why reform, if it is right in principle, is better delayed they never made clear, but it was suggested somehow that the moral climate of the day made such a change inappropriate at the present time. Another Conservative opposed the Wolfenden recommendations but indicated that he would support the repeal of Section 13 (that is, the Labouchere Amendment).

In general, I think there was little attempt to meet the arguments of those who spoke in favour of reform. It was asserted, without

any evidence, and indeed in conflict with the experience of pretty well all other countries, that to implement the Wolfenden recommendations would result in a vast increase in homosexuality and would bring greatly increased danger to our young people. There was, of course, the inevitable speech that described the homosexual as "a dirty-minded danger to the virile manhood of this country", and prophesied that a reformed law would result in notices outside houses saying "Homosexual experiences may be had within". But most of the speeches struck a more serious, if not always a more rational, note than this.

When the Home Secretary spoke, he very soon indicated that the Government's view remained unchanged. He made a temporising speech, drawing a good deal of comfort from the sharp difference of opinion in the House of Commons on the matter. He did not close the door upon the possibility of repealing the Labouchere Amendment, but he did not commit himself either, and he showed some mild interest in a suggestion that prosecutions might only be instituted with the consent of the Attorney-General. As for the Wolfenden proposals, the Government was not yet (he said) in a position to take a final decision. More information was needed; more research; more public education and discussion; and more time to weigh the possible, and necessarily speculative, consequences of modifying the relationship between law and morals.

To anyone who believed that the Government *had* modified its view, or was at least content to take a neutral stance, Mr. Butler's speech was a cold douche. After this strong indication of the official view, it was clear, despite the fact that Members enjoyed the rare privilege of a free vote, that the motion would be lost. In fact nearly half the House voted in the division lobbies—a very high proportion for a Private Member's motion. Of the 300-odd who were absent, some abstained either for tactical reasons or because they were genuinely unable to make up their minds; I think most of them probably stayed away simply because, with the Whips off, there was no incentive to remain. The result of the division was: for the motion 101, against the motion 215. The minority comprised 75 Labour Members, 22 Conservatives and 4 Liberals. The majority against the motion was made up of 178 Conservatives and 37 Labour.

There the matter rested, until in March, 1962, an attempt was made, this time by Private Member's Bill, to modify the law. Mr. Leo Abse, who was one of the successful members in the sessional ballot for bills, introduced a Sexual Offences Bill with three main objects: First, in order to establish some degree of uniformity in the application of the law, all prosecutions for offences in private between adults should be initiated by, or on behalf of, the Director of Public Prosecutions. Secondly, in order to minimise the opportunities for blackmail by eliminating stale prosecutions, proceedings in respect of such offences should only be commenced

within twelve months of the alleged offence. And lastly, the Bill would have made it mandatory upon the courts to obtain a psychiatrist's report with respect to all first offenders. On this occasion debate on the Bill was limited to one hour, a somewhat protracted debate on the Bill that preceded it suggesting that there was at least some disinclination on the part of some Members to move on to the discussion of homosexuality.

After Mr. Abse had moved the second reading of his Bill, there was time only for three speeches—one in support from the Labour benches, and two markedly hostile from the Conservative benches. The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, who had incidentally supported the Wolfenden proposals as a back-bencher two years before, was, no doubt happily for him, not called upon to express the Government's view. All the indications suggest that this would not have been a favourable view. Thus the Bill was talked out, and even these very moderate reforms were stillborn.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of these very disappointing debates was the widespread recognition that reform of some kind must come, and the absence of any serious attempt to justify the existing state of the law. There was a transparency about the excuses for delay. It could be said that there is a need for research into the aetiology of homosexuality, but it is difficult to see how this could convince those who are not already convinced that the law requires amendment. Only in the long term will further public discussion of the problem affect mass attitudes towards homosexuality, and reform, I think, is not likely to wait upon any such manifest changes of heart amongst the public at large. Whenever it does come, there is almost certain to be a short, sharp outcry; but I think this will soon die away, and the new situation will be as readily accepted as the present one. The essential work of public education has been done—it has been done by the Wolfenden Committee itself, in exposing, for all who wish to see, the injustice, the ineffectiveness, and the hypocrisy inherent in the law as it stands. Parliamentary and outside pressure will continue until we have a Government and a Home Secretary willing to risk the brief storm—unlikely to be a very violent one—which reform of this law may provoke.

MR. ROLPH: Taking the Chairman's privilege of beginning with a question of my own, may I ask you, Sir, whether in fact the rules of the House have been changed as compared with 1885 (the time of the Labouchere Amendment), or is it that they are now more rigorously observed?

MR. ROBINSON: Well, we are governed not only by Standing Orders in the House of Commons; we are also governed by past

inhibits the Government from taking any action. After all, Governments want to steer clear of trouble if they can. They want to steer clear of controversy, and this is a field where there is no absolute necessity for a Government to take any action at all, and therefore inertia is the most attractive policy. As regards individual Members of Parliament, I think it is true that some of them would hesitate to come out openly in favour of a reform of this kind, for fear of electoral consequences. What I think is not true is that those electoral consequences would be measurable, because I do not believe that people vote for Members of Parliament or vote against Members of Parliament because they have stated a view on a controversial issue with which the voter is in disagreement. I think the voters are much more likely to respect a man for taking a strong and firm line for something he believes in, even if they disagree, than they would respect somebody whom they suspect of trimming his sails to the electoral wind. So although I believe there is something in the idea of people hesitating on this account, I believe that the grounds for their hesitation are probably non-existent.

Q: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Robinson has just said that he felt the Government was likely to take the view that this was not an issue on which it is imperative or necessary to take action. I would like to ask him whether he does not think that there is one aspect of it on which it is imperative to act, and that is on grounds of national security? Is it not true to say, Sir, that blackmail of homosexuals, bearing in mind the increasing number of people with access to secret information in this uneasy world, is a very big problem? Is it not therefore ironical in the extreme that by maintaining the present laws, the Government is perpetuating its own predicament?

MR. ROBINSON: I agree entirely with everything the speaker has said, but unfortunately recent events involving security have made the climate more adverse, rather than more favourable. This, of course, is typical of the illogical attitude which people take to the subject. It is perfectly true that if you change the law as the Wolfenden Committee wanted, opportunities for blackmail would be substantially reduced, and therefore the opportunities for blackmailing people into jeopardising the security of the State would be equally reduced. But clearly, logic plays a minimal part in this controversy.

IV

GORDON WESTWOOD: Sociological Aspects of Homosexuality

THE BISHOP OF WOOLWICH (*in the Chair*): I am very glad to be here, because this is a subject on which I feel very deeply. In the course of a sermon which I preached in Canterbury Cathedral last year, I said that our attitude as a society here in this country in our treatment of homosexuality was well-nigh medieval. I think that was probably slander on the Middle Ages, because, after all, they did it in good conscience out of ignorance. If we do it today, it is certainly culpable ignorance; and one of the most important things that we have got to do in this field is to try and expel that ignorance, both by information and by research.

We are very privileged to have with us tonight Mr. Gordon Westwood, who has done as much as anyone in this field of research into the causes and treatment of homosexuality. He is a social psychologist, and is the Research Director of the Central Council for Health Education. He has already written two books on the subject, *Society and the Homosexual*, and *A Minority*, and he is engaged in a number of projects at the moment, including one on research into different homosexual groups, which he is doing for Birkbeck College in the University of London. Mr. Westwood is going to talk to us about the sociological and medical aspects of homosexuality, and I have great pleasure now in introducing him to you.

MR. WESTWOOD: Ladies and gentlemen, tonight I am going to talk about homosexuality as a social problem, and I shall start by listing the various possible approaches to social problems.

First, there is the imaginative or literary approach to the social problem, and in the works of people such as Ibsen or Shaw or H. G. Wells a social problem has been illuminated in such a way as to dramatize it and shame people into taking action. From Proust and Gide there have been novels on the subject of homosexuality; most of the modern novels are pretty awful, and they suffer from the convention that the homosexual in the story must come to a sticky end—suicide or accidental death. The tragic aspect in lesbian novels is emphasized even more, from Radcliffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness* onwards. As a matter of fact, in America at the present moment there is a flood of paperback novels on the lesbian theme, and I am told that they are bought in large numbers

by heterosexual men, who apparently derive some pleasure from reading about lesbians. And also imaginative, if not literary, are the few films on the subject of homosexuality—*A Taste of Honey*, which portrayed a homosexual in a fairly sympathetic way, and the film *Victim*, which, although obviously a somewhat emotional film with the characters overdrawn, did take the chance to put forward some arguments in favour of a reform of the law. The value of these films, of course, is that they are seen by people who would not normally read a novel or see a play, and they probably help some people to think about the problem of homosexuality for the first time.

Closely related to the imaginative approach there is the second approach, which is the journalistic treatment of homosexuality. Since the invention of printing, journals and newspapers have always been used as vehicles of social protest, but until recently very little was written about homosexuality. Indeed, I cannot remember seeing the word homosexuality in print much before 1950, except possibly in the medical Press. But since the Wolfenden Report there have been a large number of articles upon this subject. Unfortunately, accurate knowledge about it has not increased in proportion: items in the popular Press which give correct information about homosexuality are far outweighed by presentations which picture the homosexual in a distorted or stereotyped way. Indeed, I would say that the popular Press is probably lagging behind public attitudes as regards homosexuality. But there have been a number of excellent articles, particularly in *The Observer* and in the political weeklies; and C. H. Rolph, who gave the first talk in this series, has been particularly helpful in this field. I should also mention Peter Wildeblood's first book, *Against the Law*. This ran into a large number of editions, and has helped many people to think about this problem for the first time.

The third approach to social problems is religious. For thousands of years, religious morality has been the major perspective through which people have dealt with social and moral ills, and from a strictly theological point of view, social problems are in the main violations of God's commandments, and as such they are considered manifestations of evil. The theologian will concede that some social problems have non-religious explanations in part, and if he is engaged in pastoral work he will make use of social agencies and welfare societies, but to a theologian these social problems are primarily seen as violations of God's commandments—they are sins, and as such their solution must be in religious terms: expiation through prayer and penance. There is a strong historical relationship between the religious approach and a fourth approach to social problems—their legal consideration.

From the judicial point of view, the only reality that a social problem has is its legal reality as a crime. It is not something for study. Once legal guilt is established, the man must be punished,

and from the lawyer's point of view, there is no room for further argument there. But of course, the laws are made by Parliament, and so the legal approach is always bound up with the political aspect; and the method here is to decide first whether a law is necessary to curb or control a social problem, and also to look at the existing laws from time to time to see if a particular law is effective. Those of you who attended the last talk in this series heard an excellent summary of the political situation from Kenneth Robinson, and I shall not go into further detail about it today.

This leaves the last two ways of approaching a social problem—the medical and the sociological; and I shall spend the rest of my talk on these two aspects.

From the medical point of view, the objective is to get a cure, and there is a much better chance of getting a cure if you know the cause. Now, I don't want to spend too long this evening on the causes of homosexuality. It is a very large subject and not very rewarding. The last time I went over all the books and learned papers and the various theories on the causes of homosexuality, there were in fact over thirty different theories. Some of these are so vague that they can hardly be classified at all, but broadly speaking, theories of the cause of homosexuality can be put into three classifications: biological, conditioning and early environment.

First of all, the biological theories. There have been a large number of papers attempting to show an organic difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals. They include researches into hereditary differences, anatomical differences, physiological differences, and attempts to show glandular malfunction in homosexuals. It is a story of an immense amount of work and money, but the results can be summed up quite simply. A homosexual cannot be diagnosed by physical examination, and there is no convincing demonstration of endocrine imbalance in homosexuals. In other words, the homosexual condition is not inborn.

This always seems to annoy people. For some reason, there seems to be an urgent desire to believe that homosexuals are born, not made. I will not say that such a thing is impossible; but if there *is* a biological basis to homosexuality, its effects cannot be demonstrated, they cannot be seen, and they cannot be described; so I would say they are not a fit subject for scientific investigation. Perhaps the reason why people want to believe that homosexuality is an inborn condition is because they wish to show that a man cannot be held responsible for his homosexual desires. But this would be equally true if the condition was formed in early childhood, as the Freudians believe. As far as responsibility is concerned, the difference between an inborn condition and a condition acquired at the age of five, say, is purely academic. The only time when the element of responsibility is important is where conditioning is given as the cause of homosexuality.

The basic assumption behind this second broad heading—that of

conditioning—is that one man can turn another man into a homosexual by persuading him to take part in a homosexual act. This is the cause accepted without question by many politicians and moralists. They prefer to think of homosexuality as an infectious disease. The phrase they most often use is "a cancer in our society". This analogy seriously distorts the picture. It conjures up an image of an essentially healthy organism invaded by an alien substance. The policeman is seen as a kind of doctor, whose job it is to remove the cancer without affecting the character of the organism itself. As I hope to show later, the problem simply cannot be viewed in isolation in this way. The social setting around a social problem is equally important. At all events, there is no evidence to show that homosexuality is caused by a conditioning process. Indeed, there is quite strong evidence to show that this is not the case.

I come now to the last of the three main theories about the cause of homosexuality, which is early environment. This is essentially the view of the psychoanalysts. Psychoanalytical theory is not a single, coherent theory, but a variety of theories developed by numerous people, based on the writings of Sigmund Freud. But if one can generalise about the various psychoanalytical theories, one can say that nearly all of them see the homosexual condition as a symptom of some other neurosis. I won't go into this in more detail, because in any case it is very difficult to prove these theories, and indeed the theories are really only developed as a means of providing treatment.

Let us turn now to the various ways of treating the homosexual condition, starting off with psychiatric treatment. There are all sorts of different schools of thought, but the basic idea behind psychiatric treatment is to discover and bring to consciousness the basic unconscious reason for the homosexual condition. This is a generalisation which might hurt any psychiatrists in the audience, but the point I want to make is that it is essentially an intellectual process, although psychiatrists are increasingly making use of drugs to help them in this intellectual process. So this means that there are certain minimum requirements before the treatment can work. There must be a minimum level of intelligence, and there must be a certain degree of motivation. The patient must believe in the treatment, and must believe that some kind of cure is possible.

How successful is psychiatric treatment? Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to find out. The only sources of information are the records of individual psychiatrists, and inferences drawn from these are hazardous at best. Then there is the question of how great the patient's homosexual problems are to start with. Obviously a man who is rated two on the Kinsey scale (predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual) is more likely to become completely heterosexual than a man who is rated six (exclusively homosexual) on the Kinsey scale. Homosexuals are often difficult patients, and an overworked psychiatrist is more likely to

choose a man who is two or three on the Kinsey scale for prolonged psychotherapy than someone who rates as five or six.

Furthermore, the psychiatrist is human, and tends to remember his successes rather than his failures. If a man goes for treatment two or three times and then fails to turn up for any other appointment, the psychiatrist can legitimately say that this is not a failure of treatment, because the treatment had hardly started. But if we are to judge the total success rate of psychiatric treatment, we shall have to include not only those who go for treatment and then give it up, but also those homosexuals who would not co-operate with the psychiatrist even if you paid them. So all we can say at present is that what little evidence there is, shows that psychiatric treatment has a fairly low success rate, and we do not really know if it is any better than the available alternatives. And, do not forget, one of the alternatives is to do nothing about it—because it is a fact that some people have a period of extensive homosexual experience and then give it up without receiving any treatment at all.

I do not want to give the impression that psychiatric treatment is never any good, because there is no doubt that a great many men have been helped to make a complete heterosexual adjustment through psychiatric treatment. But when you think about the task the psychiatrist undertakes, it is really quite surprising that he has any success at all. In fact, what the psychiatrist has to do is break down the existing personality structure of the individual and build it up in a new way. This is quite an undertaking (and very expensive), and there certainly are not enough psychiatrists to give treatment to all the homosexuals who need it. Anyway, personalities are not often changed on a couch. They are much more likely to be changed by interactions with other people through experience.

Let us look at other ways of treating homosexuals. Those who believe that homosexuality is an inborn condition will naturally prefer to choose biological forms of treatment, and the most usual method is the administration of oestrogens. This is a drug which can reduce the strength of the sex drive, but has been found to have no effect whatsoever on the direction of the sex drive. So it will not turn a homosexual into a heterosexual; all it can do is damp down the sexual desires of a homosexual. There are occasions when this form of treatment can be very useful—with child molesters, for instance. One of the surprising things about a large number of the men who molest children is that they do not start until about the age of 50 or older, and so you can see that the administration of oestrogens to a man whose sexual life is almost at an end can be useful. A similar form of treatment to oestrogens is castration, which has been used in Denmark and Norway. The effects are the same as for oestrogen treatment; it reduces sexual activity, but the fundamental direction of the sex drive is not changed at all. It is of course a much more drastic and permanent form of treatment. In fact, the disadvantage of oestrogen treatment is that the patient

has to go on taking it, and if, for example, you are treating a sex criminal with sadistic tendencies, you cannot be sure that he will continue to take oestrogen tablets after he has left an institution. In such cases, castration is a possible remedy. But, of course, such an operation involves injury to the body and can have unfortunate emotional reactions.

Finally, there is one other form of treatment that I want to bring to your notice, and this is advocated by those who see homosexuality as a conditioned state. It is known as "aversion therapy". A case of this nature was reported recently in the *British Medical Journal.** Treatment took place in a darkened room, and during it the patient was allowed no food or drink. At two-hourly intervals, he was given an injection of apomorphine—a drug which induces nausea and vomiting. On each such occasion a strong light was shone on to a large piece of card on which were pasted photographs of nude men. The patient was asked to select one he found attractive, and it was suggested to him that he recreate his experiences with a homosexual partner. A tape recording was then played to him twice every two hours during the period of nausea. This explained the causes of his homosexual attraction, suggesting it was a learnt pattern reinforced by each homosexual experience, and describing the adverse effects on him and its consequent social repercussions. The tape ended with words like 'sickening' and 'nauseating', followed by the noise of someone vomiting. This accentuated the emetic effect of the apomorphine on the patient.

After 30 hours of this, the treatment was terminated, because the patient was in a very weak state. The next day, the same type of treatment was restarted, but with another tape which was even more detailed about the effect his practices had on him, and again ended with the words 'sickening' and 'nauseating'. This went on until he again became too weak, this time after 32 hours.

The following night, the patient was awakened every two hours and a record was played which congratulated him and explained in optimistic terms what would have been accomplished if his homosexual drive was reversed. Next morning, he was allowed up and about. On each of the third, fourth and fifth days after the apomorphine treatment had finished, a card was placed in his room, with carefully selected photographs of sexually attractive young women pasted on to it. Each morning he was given an injection of testosterone propionate, a drug which increases sexual desire, and told to retire to his room when he felt any sexual excitement. He was also provided with a record player, and records of a female vocalist "whose performance is generally recognised as 'sexy' ". It is claimed that

> "Since the treatment, his whole demeanour has altered. His relatives describe him as a new man. He himself has felt no attraction at all to the same

* 'Case of Homosexuality Treated by Aversion Therapy', by Basil James, M.B., B.ch., B.SC., D.P.M. *BMJ*, March 17th, 1962.

sex since his treatment, whereas previously this attraction had been present throughout the day. Sexual fantasy is entirely heterosexual, and he soon acquired a regular girl friend. Kissing and strong petting occurs regularly and is entirely pleasurable. He describes the treatment as 'fantastically successful', and comments on its swiftness. He has become in all respects a sexually normal person."

The process is in fact what the layman knows as "brainwashing", and it is terrifying to think what would happen if these techniques were used by the wrong sort of people. There is, of course, another serious objection. If the psychiatrists are right, homosexuality is only the outward sign of a more basic problem in the unconscious. Psychoanalysts would claim that this kind of aversion therapy does not even attempt to get to the basic root of the problem. In fact, most of them go further and say that if you block the outward symptom in this way then the problem, the neurosis, must come out in some other way, probably in a much more complex and anti-social form, leading perhaps to complete breakdown. The people who use aversion therapy say there are no unfortunate reactions, and in fact they have built up a fair amount of evidence as regards alcoholics, but very few homosexuals have undergone this treatment. It is very new, and one should not really come to firm conclusions. Certainly it should only be undertaken with the most stringent precautions, and—most important of all—a most careful long-term study of the results.

I shall now leave the medical aspects and turn to the sociological approach to homosexuality. Sociologists think that homosexuality is not just a problem of a number of deviant individuals, but a question of social maladjustment, and I should like to put before you this proposition: In any situation there is the individual and the social setting. Change either the individual or the setting, and you have a different situation. So although it is right to study the personality of the homosexual, we would claim that this is only studying a part of the problem—and this is particularly true of the homosexual condition. The sociologist would say that though the development of homosexuality and the form it takes may in part depend upon events in the early family life, it will also depend upon the attitude of society to the condition, and upon the social controls which may limit the condition, or which may encourage it to develop in particular ways.

There are all sorts of ways in which the social setting may affect the way the homosexual condition develops—urbanisation, segregation of the sexes, difference between public attitudes and private activities, early maturity, breakdown of some established taboos, changes in the structure of the family. But I am not going to go into details about these, and for one very good reason: it is almost impossible to make fundamental changes in the social setting. I have suggested that it is difficult, and perhaps dangerous, to break down and rebuild the personality of the individual; it is yet still more difficult and dangerous to break down and rebuild our society—

and most people would be against the complete breakdown of our society, except possibly supporters of Karl Marx, who do not believe that any social problem can be solved until our society is radically transformed. Not only is it very difficult to make fundamental changes in the social setting, but it is not certain that such changes would be for the better. Take the family, for example. Nowadays this seems to be the scapegoat for all our social problems—juvenile delinquency, teenage immorality, and almost every other unpleasant aspect of our behaviour is blamed upon the lessening influence of the family. But do the people who blame the family really want to make fundamental changes in the structure of the family? Because if they do, one of the first things they will have to do is introduce some form of control about mate selection, and by that I mean there will have to be some law, some test, which will select those who can marry and reject those who are not suitable for parenthood. Well, this is clearly unacceptable, and in any case, it is not certain that any of these fundamental changes are desirable.

The difficulty we sociologists have with people who want to reform the world is that they always assume that bad can only come from bad. But to a sociologist this just is not true. No doubt in the higher realms of philosophical thought something which is wholly good cannot produce evil, and something which is wholly evil cannot produce good; but to a sociologist, things are a lot more mixed up. Just to give you an example: there was a time when only rich people could afford to own a motor car, but now something like 30 per cent of all families have a car. Most people would agree that this was a change for the better. Yet it is this widespread ownership of cars which causes traffic congestion, which causes millions of pounds of waste in delays and death and injuries on the road—an example of good causing evil. A contrary example: many people assumed that there would be a rapid increase in mental breakdowns under the wartime stress of bombing. But a common cause of mental breakdown is social isolation, and in the London blitz there developed a very strong community spirit, and in fact the rate of mental breakdown during the London blitz was a good deal less than either before or after—an example of an evil thing having a by-product which is good.

If I have laboured this point, it is because it is essential to an understanding of the sociological approach. It is difficult to make people believe that something like robbery may indeed have causes which are the result of something which most people hold to be good, and people's feelings are apt to be hurt when you suggest that tolerance or individual liberty or democracy may have unanticipated evil consequences.

This brings me to the main proposition of this talk. I am suggesting that it is not possible to eradicate homosexuality in the foreseeable future, because this would involve fundamental changes in the individual and in our society, and it is by no means certain that

such changes would be an improvement. Of course, medical research into the causes of homosexuality should not be discouraged, and we should do everything possible to use every form of what might be called secondary prevention, such as the early recognition of the homosexual condition and provision of treatment for homosexuals in distress. But as far as we can tell, it is probable that the medical work on the individual and the sociological work on society will make very little difference to the total amount of homosexuality in this country. So I suggest that our objective should be not to eradicate homosexuality, but to control it, by which I mean render it socially harmless.

Some people would say that the homosexual condition is not harmful—indeed, I have heard this advanced as a reason for a reform of the law. This is not true. Homosexuality causes a great deal of suffering and unhappiness, both to homosexuals and their families, and their friends. It can be the cause of broken marriages and suicide. A man in conflict with society is encouraged to adopt other anti-social attitudes, and so homosexuality can be the cause of blackmail, prostitution, robbery, assault and even murder. It fills the clinics and it fills the prisons, and above all it is extremely wasteful, economically and socially. A man weighed down by a social problem is unlikely to contribute fully to the well-being of his community.

I do not want to exaggerate these social harms; there's no need to bring in Sodom and Gomorrah or the Fall of the Roman Empire. A nation is much more likely to decline through political apathy than through homosexuality. And incidentally, homosexual activity is probably far less harmful than heretosexual promiscuity, with the risks of pregnancy, illegitimate children, illegal abortion and the greater risks of venereal disease. Just the same, it is clear that the homosexual condition does cause a great deal of unhappiness and waste of talents, and if one looks into these social harms, one finds that in nearly every case they are caused by one of two things. First, the social pressures directed upon the homosexual, and second, the protection that the homosexual seeks by forming a minority group culture.

Homosexual society has all the characteristics of other minority groups. Some of these characteristics are good, but most of them are bad. I have written at some length on this subject, and I am merely summarizing now by saying that the basic ingredient of a minority group is destructive. It is a union against the dominant majority. It is not in itself a constructive entity. It is more likely to be an irritant than an aid to the well-being of the community. And yet all the pressures of society tend to push the homosexual into these minority groups. We tend to wall off the homosexual from the rest of society, and as I have suggested elsewhere, this social antagonism can best be described in four stages of progression.

This first stage occurs in the late teens or early twenties, when the homosexual finds that his friends are starting to go out with girls, eventually to get married, and he drifts away from their company and has to find other interests, until he comes on to the second stage, which is often a very agonizing stage, where he begins to look upon himself as an outcast, and he is filled with intense feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. Then at the third stage he meets other homosexuals, and starts to go to their meeting places and perhaps joins a homosexual group. And so at this third stage his two worlds begin to conflict, and many homosexuals resolve this dilemma by moving on to the fourth stage, the last stage, when the homosexual way of life monopolises all his interests and absorbs all his time. He gives up all efforts to resolve the conflict between the outside world and the homosexual way of life. He has in fact adopted all the characteristics of his minority group, and if he becomes involved in legal machinery, his progress down this scale is hastened.

In conclusion, just let me very briefly summarize the points I have been trying to make. I have suggested that in the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to eradicate homosexuality. In any case, giving treatment to the individual is only dealing with part of the problem; his social setting is equally important. But without making fundamental changes in the individual and fundamental changes in the social setting, we cannot expect to see much reduction in the amount of homosexuality in the foreseeable future, and so I have suggested that we should concentrate our efforts upon controlling the homosexual condition and on rendering it less harmful, which seems to me a more practical and a more feasible approach to the problem. Viewed in this way, it is no longer a major social problem, compared with nuclear warfare or mental illness, juvenile delinquency or slum clearance, or even traffic congestion. It has little effect upon our economic development, our political stability, or our national strength. It should not be beyond our capabilities to devise some method of control which will enable each homosexual to lead a happier life and therefore a more useful life, and this in the final analysis must be a benefit to the whole community.

Q: If I understood Mr. Westwood aright, I received the impression that he felt that homosexuality *in itself* was the cause of a great deal of unhappiness and blackmail and suicide and so on and so forth. May I ask whether he might be prepared to qualify this to the extent that many of these evils follow not from the *existence* of homosexuality as a condition, but from the pressure imposed upon homosexuals by a completely hostile society—that it is in effect the attitude of society which brings these evils in its wake, and not the homosexual condition as such?

MR. WESTWOOD: I would agree with nearly all of that, with the suggestion that the social harms are caused by the pressures directed on the homosexual, rather than by the condition itself. Nearly all of it—certainly most things like blackmail, suicide, and so forth. I think we should just add this one extra thing, that in fact the homosexual who has accepted his homosexuality is going to lose certain things which most people consider to be good and worth having, such as a family, children, a secure life in his old age. But in the main, certainly, the really harmful things, I would agree with you, are the result of pressures from outside—and don't forget that I also added that these pressures from outside create this protection, this minority group, which in itself causes trouble, and is to a certain extent anti-social. I am not saying that all homosexuals are anti-social: what I am saying is that in fact the effects of homosexuality can be and often are harmful, and I am suggesting that this is what we should concentrate on; that we can lessen the harm, and that we are wasting our time if we are going to try to get rid of homosexuality. My suggestion is that this is not possible in the immediate future. But we can do, and should do, a lot to make the life of the homosexual easier, and this in itself will reduce the harm that the homosexual condition does.

Q: You suggested some control of homosexuals. Would you enlarge upon the kind of control you visualize? And then you speak about homosexuals as a problem. But surely there is no more a homosexual problem than there is a problem of the Jewish minority or a coloured minority, or *any* minority; the real problem is the ignorance of the majority?

MR. WESTWOOD: It is quite true, as I said in my talk, that homosexuals are driven into a minority group and suffer from exactly the same things as other minority groups—Jews and coloured people and so on—and the same remedies for those other groups are indeed the remedies for homosexuals. That is to say, recognition of the problem—not attempts to cure it, in the sense of eradicating it, but the provision of the means by which a homosexual can lead a happy life and a useful life. I would say that this applies to all minority groups, and that when you no longer push them into these situations, then they no longer have the destructive aims of minority groups.

Q: Is there any evidence that in the case of neurotics who are homosexual, their homosexuality is incidental to the neurosis, and not vice versa?

MR. WESTWOOD: It is quite true that in some neuroses and psychoses the homosexuality is incidental to the major mental disorder, but it is also true that a man who is homosexual and so worried about it, and so oppressed by social pressures, will develop a neurosis, so it can happen both ways. It can be completely

incidental to a much more serious sickness, but the fact of being homosexual can, because of the influences from outside, create a neurosis.

Q: The venereologist of a London hospital fairly recently made a statement that there was a reservoir of venereal disease in homosexuals who come to this country from abroad. What are the facts?

MR. WESTWOOD: I can give you the facts, but not the explanation. The facts are that gonorrhoea is going up among young girls and among young boys—the amount of gonorrhoea discovered in the country each year has climbed continuously in the last three years. The amount of syphilis has not gone up among young girls at all; it has only slightly gone up among men, and among those for whom it has gone up, a large number have told the venereologists that they are homosexual. So it seems as if there is a spread of syphilis among homosexuals in this country.

MR. GREY: In his talk, Mr. Westwood made some points which I myself found rather paradoxical, in particular three. First, he seemed to consider that the homosexual condition was unfortunate because it led to, or resulted in, a great deal of unhappiness and personal maladjustment. I think many of us felt that this is putting the cart before the horse, in the sense that all these consequences are not the result of homosexuality itself, but of the attitudes which are shown towards it by our society. He then said that he felt that some sort of control of homosexuality was necessary. I was not quite clear why he used the word "control", and in quite what sense he felt that there should be control. I think we all feel that a fundamental adjustment is necessary in the relationship between society and the homosexual, both as an individual and as a group, and that there has got to be a great deal of rethinking about that on both sides. I was also a little bit surprised that he seemed to feel that the existence of a homosexual minority was in itself an unhealthy thing, because it necessarily has, in the present circumstances, some anti-social aspects. I would have thought rather that there could have been a great deal of good and a great deal of helpfulness and even healthiness coming from a homosexual minority that was conscious of its homogeneous existence towards society, if a proper and healthy relationship existed between society and the various minority groups which comprise it. I wonder if, in conclusion, Mr. Westwood would like to comment on these particular aspects?

MR. WESTWOOD: We are talking about the present circumstances, and present circumstances do cause and form the minority group. If the law was reformed, and the social attitude towards homosexuality was understanding and tolerant, then there would not be a homosexual minority group at all, and this to me is the ideal situation.

V

ANNE ALLEN, J.P.: Sex and the Family

MR. AMBROSE APPELBE *(in the Chair)*: introducing Mrs. Allen, said that besides being a magistrate and leading a busy professional life as a journalist and broadcaster, she had four teen-age children of her own, two step-children, and had been foster-mother to no less than twelve other children. "How one woman in one short life can manage all these things I cannot think, and I have the utmost pleasure in introducing her to you tonight."

MRS. ALLEN: I know that I am angry, but I am not quite sure if I am angry about our puritan heritage in general, or our own stupidity as parents in particular. One way and another, a great many of the children that are lent us for their childhood are ruined by our selfishness, possessiveness, prudishness and tyranny; by our frightened, ostrich-like attitude to perfectly straightforward facts, such as that it takes a man and a woman to make a child, and by our lack of affection. Because most children—not all children, but most children—come into this world as pretty well balanced little babies, and we then proceed to change, mutate and twist them in one way or another.

If I am blaming parents for this, I of course recognise that you can only look to their own childhood, and that of their grandparents, and so on, back and back and back. As a journalist, I get hundreds of letters and over and over again they say the same thing: "I know I ought to tell her, but how can I? I was told nothing, and I don't know the words." This is from married women who have had children, but still cannot tell their own children.

You may say, "Does it matter terribly? Most people grow up anyway, and does it really matter if we miss out something of their mental or social upbringing?" I think it does. I think it matters, because it colours the *whole* of their personality if one of their most basic drives in life—that of sex—is shrouded in secrecy or smeared as a dirty thing.

I have a passionate feeling that what we all lack is the power to communicate. If husbands and wives communicated and parents and children communicated, a lot of the ills of this world would be no more. I have a lot of young people who come to my house, a sort of broken-down youth club. I acquired them at some stage,

I am not quite sure how, except that I think they found I was prepared to answer a straight question, which amazed them. When they were saying "our parents are this", and "our parents are that," I said "Yes, but can't you talk to them? I mean, can't you explain that you're no longer a child?" They replied: "But you don't understand—how can we talk to our parents? Sex is a dirty word in our house."

This seems to me a terrible thing. Most of us go through the stage where we find a great deal of pleasure in dirty jokes; but whereas an occasional joke may be acceptable, it is frightful that the very fabric of family life, the very love on which that family is based, should be considered "dirty". It takes the tenderness out of something which should be tender, the strength out of something that should be essentially strong, the unselfish giving out of something that should be generous, and, if you like, the ecstasy out of something that should be ecstatic.

We hand our children a dirty joke and then we are actually surprised when they "go wrong", as we say—which means that they do not conform to our particular standards. Sex instruction in schools is all very well, but it is not enough. To teach children the bare facts of life without the facts of living or the facts of loving is useless. One of my own children goes to a very satisfactory school, and even before a child goes there at eleven, you are told that in a certain term the girls there will be given lessons about reproduction. In other words, it is up to you—in fact, they say quite clearly at the school: "Please see to it that she knows from you, and we will then fill in the biological details." This is a school that is highly thought of in my part of London, and one can presume that it has got enlightened parents. The great day came, the lesson arrived, and at the moment when this very skilled married biology teacher was telling these nice little girls about sexual intercourse, one girl fainted. My daughter—a knowledgeable child—turned to her friend and said "Good gracious; I don't think she knew", and the friend turned to her and said "I'm not surprised; neither did I." So you see, one way and another, parents just are not doing their job.

What comes out of this ignorance? Let me list some of the worst evils that arise from our ostrich-like, puritanical attitude to something that should be the very fabric of life. One is the frightening rise in the number of illegitimate children. Yes, this is largely due to straightforward ignorance. "I didn't know, nobody told me": still, in this day and age, in spite of all the books, all the programmes, all the lessons, there are children who simply do not know. More frightening, it is not only the ignorant girl who is liable to become an unmarried mother, it is also the unhappy child. She is not getting the love and affection that is her birthright at home, so she sneaks it, however fleetingly, in the arms of a boy. It is very exciting. For the first time, she is able to give pleasure. Here is someone that wants her

terribly, and it is very easy for her to mix this feeling with love. It is also a marvellous way of getting back at Mum! This is the way these girls are getting back at an adult world that deprives them of tenderness, affection, understanding and *real* communication.

Lack of affection can lead quite straightforwardly to a man or a woman becoming a cruel parent. One of the most unfortunate recurrent cases before the N.S.P.C.C. is the man that I call the sergeant-major father. He has almost certainly been brought up in an institution, where, by the nature of things, he has not had continuous, warm, loving affection. He then goes into the Army—it's as good a way as any other, if you have no home—and he maybe rises to be a sergeant-major. People obey him, and this is his identity. And then he marries, and he expects his flat to be run like a squad or a platoon, and his children must obey instantly. It can even lead to him beating little girls with his belt: it can lead to the most frightful cruelty, and everyone tut-tuts and says "How terrible. How can you sit on the Bench when there is a case of child cruelty? I couldn't do it—I would see red."

Well, of course, *I* see red. When I see photographs of a terribly bruised child I get very angry, but what is the point of being angry? What we have to try and do is to see if we can create a world where parents do not need to feel so desperate, so frustrated, so anxious to prove themselves marvellous men, that they need to beat a child.

Prudish attitudes are another product of ignorance—the sort of prudishness in which you imply that children only have heads and hands, and nothing else, and it is never implied that you have a physical life as well as a mental or emotional one. One of the most tragic results of this is that large numbers of women get married who, because of their background and upbringing, are entirely unable to face the sexual side of marriage, so that they remain virgins. This is not as rare as you might think—hundreds of wives remain virgins not just for a few weeks, but for years. One recent survey found that one of the wives interviewed had been married for seventeen years, and not once during that time had normal marital relations taken place. Such women have been petrified out of their natural reaction. If you have either been told nothing, or you have been told that the whole thing is dirty, or it has been so driven into you that you must never let a man touch you until you are married that in fact you can't even when you are married, this can happen. It is now well established that out of all the women who are married and who do not have children, about four or five out of every hundred are not mothers because in fact they have never been wives, in the full sense.

I would add to this list the man who commits violent sex crimes. I think he again has never had any of the love or tenderness put into the whole area of sex of his life, and it has been so suppressed that it has to explode into violence. I am not excusing him—clearly our children have to be protected. But I do not believe you

ever find a man committing a violent sexual crime against a woman or a child if he has had a reasonably happy, balanced home life.

Sometimes I despair at our hypocrisy. We are horrified by sex crimes, by immorality or licence, yet at the same time we like to read stories in our newspapers that are little short of pornography. Another instance of hypocrisy: recently the Family Planning Association wanted to put an advertisement in London tube trains. It was very carefully worded, and it stressed that they were anxious to help people who could not have children and wanted children, as well as those who wanted to plan their families—a thing that is acceptable to most people of most religions in this world, which is vastly over-populated. But it was thought to be debatable; a section who did not like it protested, and down came the advertisements. Yet at the same time, if a mother who is driven desperate by a child's crying, who has had five children in six years and is worn out, should throw her baby in the cot in a fit of temper and hit its head and kill it, we will all be so horrified, and we shall want to clap her into prison! This is what I call hypocrisy. In the same fashion, two out of every twenty-five pregnancies are thought to end in illegal abortion; yet all attempts to modify our outdated laws on this are turned down. Such is this wonderful world we live in, with its double standards of morality. We may know that there is a darker side of life, but by heaven, we push it out and live behind our own lace curtains. And you go to an afternoon meeting of a womens' organisation, where they all have their best hats on, and you mention any of these things—and oh, they are mortally offended, and they do not think it happens in their street.

Now I come to another matter which I myself think can be a great personal tragedy, and that is the question of homosexuality. I was one of the first people to support the Homosexual Law Reform Society, and I am absolutely sure that the law is medieval. And I am absolutely convinced that adult people, acting in private, should act in the way that they consider is right for them. But I shall also feel I have failed in some way if any of my children grow up to be homosexual, because again I feel that so often this is a parental thing. I know we do not fully understand this, and that there are medical and other reasons, but I also know that many men become so attached to their mother, or find their father a nonentity or a shadow, so that this spoils their opportunities of growing up normally. I shall feel I have failed if this happens in my family, because I think the possessive mother has much to answer for.

I also think that we are in a complete muddle because of the growing equality of the sexes. A very interesting and peculiar thing is now happening in criminal statistics. We know that more crimes are happening, and we know that more juvenile delinquency is happening, but up to a year or two ago you could say that for every ten boys who got into trouble, only one or maybe two girls

would do so. But now the increase of delinquency amongst girls is much higher than that amongst boys. And something is happening that virtually never happened before—girls are beginning to be delinquent in gangs. Also, girls are beginning to *lead* gangs, and this is where I say we have got muddled in our sexual roles. Girls have got so besotted with the idea that they must have equal opportunities that they have forgotten that it is *wonderful* to grow up as a girl—absolutely wonderful: I would not be anything else for the world!

Somewhere along the line we have got to convince our boys that they are going to be men and our girls that they are going to be women, and that they should be delighted. I would say in passing that we further muddle the whole thing by this idiotic English system of single-sex boarding schools. I think it is largely parents without any proper feeling of affection who would use boarding schools, at any rate for young children—I suspect that the English do not love their children as much as some other countries do. We are too cold and affectionless, and do not show nearly enough love.

Well, what are we meant to do to build a world that will give our children some joy—real deep joy in living, loving and eventually having families of their own? First we must remember that never at any stage do we own a child. They are persons in their own right, and we are there to care for them and look after them, to guide and train, if you like; and if you use the word "discipline" to mean affection and training, and not beating and bashing, I would add discipline to the list.

Then, we should always answer a child's questions about sex frankly. And we should bring love into sex instruction, and not just make it a biological thing. Few of us are ideally situated in our married lives, but ideally we should show love to each other and to them. And perhaps most difficult of all, we should be honest and tolerant about ourselves and about them. The family that is brought up to imply that they are marvellous, and deviations or difficulties only happen to other people, are usually dreadful, and sometimes in for a sad shock.

Unless parents can be honest in this way, and reasonably tolerant, so that their children breathe this in, you can't teach them to be tolerant; they will only know from every passing word and action of yours. You cannot say to a child, "You must never be intolerant to a coloured person". They only learn it because you invite people of other nationalities into your house, and never imply there is anything "different" about them. This, too, is how they learn that there are differences in people's sexual attitudes. In conclusion, I apologise if I sound as if I've got a Salvation Army bonnet and a tambourine, but I do believe most profoundly that one way or another, love will always find a way through any family problem.

MR. APPELBE: I would like to start the questions by asking this: don't you find that one of the major problems is the man or the woman who can't *accept* love, either heterosexual or homosexual? They have been ruined at a very early age, probably before they were three or two years old. What can one do about that afterwards?

MRS. ALLEN: Yes, they call these affectionless children, and it is of course terribly dispiriting when you come to help, because whatever you do, you seem unable to get through to them. I imagine that in the extreme cases one has to go right back to the beginning and start again with some form of psychoanalysis.

Q: If the parents are devoted to the family, and the whole purpose in life is to see that the children grow up properly balanced and happy children, how would you accept the fact that there was a deviation in the adult part of the family? Would you consider it right to take the children into your confidence and explain everything to them, or would you pretend that such things don't exist? Do you take your children into your confidence, where the adult part of sex life is concerned?

MRS. ALLEN: It would depend so much on the kind of deviation, the form it was taking, and the age and temperament of the child, wouldn't it? I mean, some children are more mature, and you could talk to them quite freely about things, while it wouldn't be right or proper to talk to the others in the same way. For instance, take the hypothetical case of a man who is really a homosexual but who has married—probably because his family doctor told him it would cure it—and they have had children and this has been a misery to him, and the time has come when in fact the pull has been so strong that he has gone away and has what I would loosely call "had an affair" with another man, and yet he loves his children. I would not have thought it was proper for a mother to say to young children, "Well, Daddy's different, and he really is in love with another man". I think that would muddle them too much. But I think the time would come, as they grew older—and I'm not prepared to put an age on this—where she could say something, and, if she had the courage to do so, it would help the children through it much more than if they began to learn things from outside.

MR. GREY: I think one of the difficulties about this is the appalling ignorance you get in some of the husbands and wives themselves. I remember there was a terrible case where a married man was convicted of a homosexual offence—they were a fairly young couple—and the wife killed the baby because she said she didn't want him to "grow up a pervert like his father".

Q: Why is it so difficult to adopt children? I believe that unless you are very religious, you simply can't get a child, or it takes

years and years, and yet orphanages are full of children. Is it that people don't want children over a certain age, or what?

MRS. ALLEN: Well, there may be an element of that in it, but in fact, most of the children available for adoption are not orphans—it's more than likely that they have got a parent around. I believe that over ninety per cent of children in institutions are not fully orphans.

Originally, like so many things in this country, adoption societies sprang from religious bodies. And they felt that they must go on asking for at least nominal church membership and the vicar's recommendation and so on. It is a little easier to get a child from a local authority, many of whom are prepared to say that, provided the home seems to be suitable in every other way, they will let you adopt. Or, of course, you can be a foster-parent, which isn't terribly satisfactory if what you really want to do is adopt, because you're always having to give up your foster children. I really don't think we like our children as much as in some countries. In New Zealand, if you are a foster mother it is a tremendous honour, but here, it's thought slightly odd. A funny look comes over people's faces, and they say "A *foster* mother? But what do you want to do *that* for?"

I think we all would accept that there are thousands of very satisfactory parents now who do not in fact attend church and who bring the children up basically with Christian ethics but certainly not in church. This, to my mind, is infinitely better than any institution.

MR. APPELBE: This is a very big problem. Before the 1926 Adoption Act, adoption was fairly easy; it used to be rather informal, and I as a solicitor would arrange adoptions quite easily. But now, a private individual hardly dare arrange an adoption. It has got to be done in accordance with the law, through societies, and some of these societies are rather old-fashioned in their approach, and exceedingly cautious.

MRS. ALLEN: Well, personally I would rather adoption was too difficult than not difficult enough, because I would not like to go back to the days when babies could be easily acquired by quite unsuitable people, who were neurotic or whose marriage was breaking up, for instance. I do believe in some matching and some care, and several visits by somebody who has nothing to gain one way or the other, to be sure that this is a really loving home and not just a home that looks loving on the outside.

Q: One of the reasons for the severity of the adoption law was surely in order to prevent baby farming. As you will know, that was one of the N.S.P.C.C's early problems—women who took these babies from parents who didn't want them, and just fed them on water and sugar and kept the money, and then farmed them out to even worse people.

MRS. ALLEN: That is why I say I would rather the laws were too stringent than not stringent enough, but I'm not sure that they are really in line with modern thinking now.

MR. APPELBE: How much do they pay for fostering a child?

MRS. ALLEN: It varies, but on the whole about 28 shillings a week, I think. It is meant to cover the child's food and pocket-money, and you get a quarterly allowance for clothes. In fact, if your standards are reasonable and you have birthday parties and some outings and things it doesn't cover you, and my own view is that if we took fostering and made it a paid thing, but terribly carefully supervised, many women who don't want to go out to work but love babies and love home-making could have a most rewarding life and still earn some extra money.

MR. GREY: In the course of our work, we sometimes come across the homosexual person who resents his homosexuality most bitterly of all because he loves children and he cannot ever have any. You even hear of homosexual men or homosexual women who are living together who would like nothing better than to have a child. Obviously the thought of them adopting a child would be quite unthinkable to the official or institutional mind. But what do you think of this yourself, just as an idea?

MRS. ALLEN: I don't think it would be a good idea, because children are terribly conventional, and although most of them haven't got ideal homes, I think they really like to have a mother and a father. After all, their friends come and go at home, and to explain two daddies or two mummies would be a little difficult, I think!

Q: On this particular point, I do know of a homosexual who lived in England until about five years ago and then emigrated to Canada where apparently anybody can adopt a child. This man has adopted two boys, and they have completely made his life. (They have only one father!) I also knew another homosexual who is married to a woman, and they have just adopted a child. He is drunk every night, and she is drunk about twice a week.

Q: Could I, as a member of a children's society, which pays its foster mothers fifty shillings a week and more, put this point about adoption societies? Is it not really a fact that the demand for children for adoption is so enormous, and the number of children available is so small, that these societies can choose very carefully and impose those standards which *they* think are right, and some of these societies do require a religious standard; not all, only some?

And secondly, is it not conceivable that when a mother places a child in a society with a religious background or a religious basis

or standard, she's doing so because she wants her child to have that sort of standard in its upbringing?

MRS. ALLEN: I think she would say so, and on the form where you agree to give the child for adoption is a question which says: "Is there any particular religion in which you wish this child to be brought up?"

You are quite right in saying that supply and demand is what gives the societies the power to impose these things. I'm always so terribly sorry for the Roman Catholic babies, because there are so many of them, and comparatively so few Roman Catholic would-be adopters. I'm also terribly sorry for children with any kind of handicap, or coloured children, because of course these are the ones that are filling our institutions, who are available for adoption and simply aren't getting adopted. But heaven forbid that we ever ask people to adopt a West Indian child, for instance, unless they are fully aware of the difficulties involved in doing so. It's not what you feel, but what your neighbours feel that creates the pressures you are up against.

Q: I think everybody here would agree with the speaker that the prudish way of bringing up children which she has described is a very bad thing, but isn't this changing very fast indeed? My children have been to State schools throughout, and I've never got the impression that the other children don't know these things. In fact, my little girl, who is now thirteen, was reading a Victorian book a little while ago, and she said "Do you know, Mummy, children in those days didn't know about sex?" My older girl is now fifteen, and in the Scripture lessons at her school, instead of having some of the conventional Scripture, the teacher discusses with them whether pre-marital intercourse is a good thing or a bad thing, absolutely freely, and taking it for granted that this is a perfectly familiar topic to all of them. Don't you think that the situation is changing extremely fast for the better?

MRS. ALLEN: Yes, I do think it is changing, but I don't think it has changed as much as we would like to think. I think that in large sections of the community it has changed, and people are more liberal, but I am basing this almost exclusively, if you like, on hundreds of letters that come my way as a journalist, and I am shocked by the fear—the fear from parents who don't know how to talk, the fear from children who don't know how to ask. I mix with quite a lot of young people from a fairly wide cross-section, and I think that the boys, perhaps, in particular, don't seem to have been told. They say the girls are told, so I said naively: "Perhaps your parents think the girls have to be told for their protection." They were very angry, and said: "But *we* need protecting too!"

MR. GREY: I was a little bit surprised at the remark which somebody made, that there are so many more people wanting to adopt children than there are children available for adoption, because we always hear today that illegitimacy is one of the great problems of our age, and with all these hundreds and even thousands of illegitimate babies around, what in fact happens to most of them? Do the mothers keep most of them, or what?

MRS. ALLEN: A lot of them are kept, but there still are more people wanting to adopt than are able to. Any would-be adopter will know that they have got to be prepared to wait two or three years.

MR. APPELBE: Of course, a lot of them are not acceptable because they're physically poor children, or they're mentally defective or something of that sort.

Q: I wonder if you would like to say something about the parents' attitude to boys or girls who have homosexual relations bringing their friends home. What do you do in this kind of situation?

MRS. ALLEN: Are you meaning boys or girls in their teens, or older?

Q: Yes.

MRS. ALLEN: I would like to think most people, and I do think that certainly a lot of people, would now recognize that almost everybody goes through a homosexual phase during their teens. It may be just having a crush on your games mistress, or something like this, but one way or another one goes through a fairly intense phase of this kind, and presumably this is accepted by most families, even if they have never thought it out. I think that people find it very much more difficult to cope if it is, say, a son in his twenties. For some reason, and I don't think it is because of the law, it is not quite so difficult if it is a girl. I don't know why it is, but girls can go away and live with other girls, and nobody seems to mind—this is all right, I think, because theoretically they could be just chaperoning each other from the wicked, bad men! But obviously two men living together aren't chaperoning at all, and therefore it immediately becomes rather suspect, and the neighbours may think it's odd and everybody gets awfully worried.

Personally, having said I would be disappointed, beyond my own personal feeling of failure I'm absolutely certain it would go no further—I mean, as far as I am concerned, if one of my boys wanted to bring a friend home, in the sense that one would be expecting him to bring a girl friend home, and he brought a boy friend home, I don't think it would worry me. It certainly wouldn't show in my attitude to the friend.

MR. GREY: On this question of the homosexual phase that everybody passes through in adolescence, I personally think this is one of the great myths of our time which is swallowed far too easily. I have known some intensely heterosexual people who have chased girls single-mindedly from the age of eleven, and I am quite sure there are lots and lots of people like that who never go through this homosexual "phase" at all.

MRS. ALLEN: Yes, I think you may be right, and I think it is a myth that is largely increased by segregation in boarding schools, because when you're there, what else could you be? I would suspect that it will become less general as time goes on. With youngsters, as we are told until we are sick of it, reaching maturity much earlier, with more freedom and more money and so on, dating earlier and following the American pattern, I would say that there will be no need to go through a homosexual phase in adolescence.

MR GREY: Isn't there something to be said for the view that in a completely unrepressed or non-repressed society, far more people would be consciously bisexual? And that that is a more natural state, perhaps, than a completely repressed heterosexuality or a completely repressed homosexuality?

MRS. ALLEN: I personally don't subscribe to this, but you may be right.

MR. GREY: I'm not sure that I agree with it myself, but I think it is quite a strong theoretical viewpoint.

MRS. ALLEN: This business of growing up to be bisexual has not come my way. My own feeling about adolescence is that the most powerful thing in adolescence is a great upsurgence of love, an overwhelming wish to attach affection to somebody, to someone. That's why in boarding schools or single-sex schools it often gets attached to other girls or boys, or staff of the same sex. And that is why, if you are in a more open community, you are more liable to begin heterosexual attractions. 'Teens are almost manic depressive aren't they? They are up, they are down; the blackest things are blacker than we know, and the ecstasies and excitements of falling in love and so on are probably more than most of us know, regrettably, any more. But I don't think that this proves anything about being bisexual when you are grown up. I think it's just that when you are adolescent, you are suddenly aware of being a person and not just a shadow of your parents, and you really have such an enormous welling of love, you have got to give it somewhere, perhaps to six people at once.

MR. APPELBE: That welling of love is very difficult in a society like America, where it *has* to be heterosexual at a very early age, and a boy of sixteen will commit suicide if he hasn't fixed enough dates. This may be such an enforced thing that it has a reaction

the opposite way later on, and perhaps it is much better to allow homosexual love to develop to its fruition in early life. Don't you think the other thing might do almost as much harm—this American system of fear of not dating?

MRS. ALLEN: Oh, I think this forcing, and feeling that you are a failure because you are not going out on Friday, is thoroughly bad. I hope it doesn't come here to the same extent.

MR. APPELBE: I wonder if you'd like to say anything in closing?

MRS. ALLEN: Well, speaking as a parent, whatever we do with our children, we are bound to make the most appalling mistakes, and we must pick ourselves up and start again. But if we can give them a heritage of tolerance and affection, they in turn perhaps will be better parents than we have been.

VI

ANTONY GREY: Towards a Sexually Sane Society

MR. GREY: Ladies and gentlemen, may I very briefly introduce my Chairman, who will then introduce me? Mr. Keith Wedmore is the Assistant Treasurer of the Homosexual Law Reform Society,* he is a barrister, is married and has four children. He is a member of the Quaker group which recently produced a report called *Towards a Quaker View of Sex,* and he has just been adopted as Liberal parliamentary candidate for West Bristol.

MR. WEDMORE: You may know that a few months ago, Mr. Antony Grey took over from Mr. and Mrs. Newall, and is now Secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society and of the Albany Trust. He has been connected with the Society for many years, in fact ever since its foundation in 1958, and has been Treasurer since 1960. This evening he is going to talk about the future of society's attitude towards sexual problems.

MR. GREY: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the title which I chose for this talk is a deliberately vague title—but I hope it is not going to be a deliberately vague talk. I did, in fact, have a fairly precise idea in my mind of what I meant by this title, "Towards a Sexually Sane Society," because I believe that the society we are living in today, at any rate in this country, is not a particularly sane one in this respect. It might even be described as a sexually insane society, or at least one that is mad about sex in various ways. This, I think, is an unfortunate state of affairs which we should try to put right.

I believe it was Bernard Shaw who said that there has been more nonsense talked about sex than about any other subject; and if one reads the newspapers or listens to debates in Parliament, one certainly gets the strong feeling that this is true. I once talked to a rather eminent member of the House of Lords who had previously sat in the Commons for many years, and he said to me: "You know, when those fellows get up and talk about sex they completely take leave of their senses. From the way they carry on, you would think that every girl was a shrinking young virgin and every young man was a brute who wanted to rape the first woman he came

*He resigned this position in May 1963.

across, and it is terribly difficult to get them to be in the least balanced or sensible about anything of this kind."

Sex, of course, is just one aspect of life. It is a very important aspect—indeed, a fundamental appetite, like sleeping or eating or thinking—and one cannot ignore it. By trying to ignore it or suppress it, one merely succeeds in making it into an overwhelmingly important thing which gets out of all proportion in life, and lots of people nowadays make far too much fuss about it, usually in quite the wrong ways. Three main categories of these spring to mind. First of all, there are the puritans—the people who think the whole thing is dirty and ought to be suppressed. These are the people who provide the censors and the punishers, and unfortunately they still dominate our law-making and law-giving. Secondly, there are the people who set out to exploit sex in a commercial way; not just the people who live on prostitution and make big profits out of that, but the sexual titillators, among whom I would include not merely the pornographers, but also the sensational Press, who do it under the guise of preaching good behaviour and saying "How shocking all this is", while all the time they are really creating more relish for it. And then there are the unfortunate people who as a result of all this titillation and repression become utterly obsessed by sex, so that it gets out of all proportion in their lives and their whole thought and life-drive is dominated by the unsuccessful search for satisfactory sex.

I think that all these English attitudes are particularly unbalanced and immature; in fact, we are quite rightly regarded as the laughing stock of the Continentals in this respect (although I sometimes wonder whether they are all that much better than we are). You may have read Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge in this week's *New Statesman*, commenting on the Quaker report. He says: "Sex, to the French, remains pleasurable or humorous. They cannot grasp it as a duty. The wrongs of homosexuals condemned to seek their pleasures in public lavatories, which so harrowed the Quakers, leave them cold." So those who seek a healthier and more matter-of-fact approach are themselves sensationalised in this sort of way. The Quaker report has been commented upon in the Press in ways which are simply a grotesque garbling of what they did in fact say—I am sure Mr. Wedmore will agree with that.

MR. WEDMORE: Emphatically.

MR. GREY: The more one tries to do social work to help people who have sexual problems, the more one realises that workers in all the fields of family difficulties and sex matters come up against a mountain not merely of prejudice, but of wilful ignorance. People don't want to know about sex; they not merely don't know about it, they actively don't *want* to know. This is especially true of homosexuality, because homosexuality is a subject about which one either knows a good deal or else one knows nothing at all;

and those who don't want to know will not be told. I have been told of an eighteen-year-old boy who was troubled with homosexual feelings, and who, having hesitated for months, finally screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, came down to breakfast one day, and said to his parents: "Mummy and Daddy, I've got something very important to tell you: I'm homosexual". His mother, who was pouring out the coffee, did not even bother to look up. She said, in reproving tones, "Don't be silly, dear, that's not a funny joke at all". In other words, "This couldn't possibly happen to *my* child—it's always those nasty people down the road". I have also had the extraordinary experience of discussing this subject with one of the Members of Parliament who had expressed himself most violently against the Wolfenden Report in a House of Commons debate, and who, after a certain amount of quite friendly and reasonable conversation with me, suddenly looked very puzzled and asked: "Is it really true that these homosexuals actually find the idea of going to bed with a woman distasteful?"

This is the basic problem which we at the Albany Trust are up against. Almost in spite of ourselves, we are becoming a social service agency for quite a lot of our time, and in the process we are learning quite a lot about all sorts of people. The ignorance which exists about this problem of homosexuality is quite appalling. I have heard of a couple of cases only this week of parents who have been so shocked and upset by finding that their children had homosexual tendencies that they either turned them out of the house or assaulted them. And the children, the people who come to us for advice, will often say: "Well, I have lived with my parents for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, and I don't know what to do, and life is very difficult." Usually I ask them whether their parents have any idea about their homosexuality, and they reply: "Oh, no—I couldn't possibly tell them. I would not know how to start". This is a very difficult problem, which everybody has got to solve for themselves, but which far too few people are making any attempt to solve at all.

These attitudes are of course largely due to the law, which is why we want to change the law; but it is not the only factor. I believe that quite apart from any question of the law, there is a genuine fear among the population at large of the unknown, and a dislike of the different. However silly it may be, there are many people who feel that homosexuals are a threat to their security—to their emotional security, if not their physical security—and that is why it is not sufficient for us to speak of "persecution", and to present homosexuals as a minority which has a legitimate grievance, in order to get the law changed. This is, of course, true; but we have got to take a more positive approach, and somehow to make society surer than it is at present that the homosexuals in its midst are not a danger to it.

How are we to move towards a more sexually sane society?

First of all, I think that everyone who wishes to do so could usefully begin by making an honest self-criticism of their own lives and characters, seeing if they could be more objective about them and moving towards a better outlook in themselves. And those who are homosexual must be sufficiently honest with themselves to think seriously about some of the most common criticisms of homosexuals which are made by the public at large, in the Press, in Parliament and so forth, even if they feel that these criticisms are largely unfounded and born of ignorance. I would ask everyone, nevertheless, to try and think what they can do about these things, both as individuals and as members of a community; and in discussing them, I would like people also to speculate how far the situation with respect to these matters will or ought to be different a few years after the law has been changed?

The first of these very common criticisms is that far too many homosexuals are indiscriminately promiscuous, and that they positively enjoy indulging in furtive and sordid sexual activities, often in public places—not merely because they are forced to do this, but because they prefer it that way and get a kick out of it. Possibly there are far worse things than promiscuity; and much of the public misbehaviour which goes on may not bother anybody else. But, to say the least, it does not help to improve the public's idea of homosexuals one little bit; and I think we should lose no opportunity of stressing that the present state of the law against private relationships tends to increase the amount of promiscuous and public misbehaviour, rather than to curb it.

Then there is the common belief that homosexuals are a danger to youth, because they would all like to seduce teenagers if they got the chance. This also may be a wild exaggeration, but I cannot help being conscious that behaviour of this sort does go on. Of course, it is unrealistic to expect that teenagers who are homosexual will happily refrain from all sexual activity until they reach their twenty-first birthday; and it may be that implementation of the Wolfenden Report will create a difficult situation for youngsters if the law is altered to make twenty-one the consenting age. As you know, the Homosexual Law Reform Society stands for the Wolfenden Report, and for this particular recommendation; but I think there is no harm in discussing its possible consequences. Perhaps, with the spreading frankness that there is these days about heterosexual teenagers' sexual activities, there may also come about a greater degree of frankness and understanding about homosexual teenage behaviour as well. But it would surely be a good thing for anyone who does have contact with teenagers in this category to think very hard about the desirability, in their own best interests, of discouraging them from a path which we all know is fraught with personal difficulties and dangers, and also with some inevitable unhappiness.

In *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, the authors deny the notion that all homosexual relationships are necessarily sinful just because they

are homosexual. This is rather a remarkable view for a Christian body to put forward, and some of the Press commentaries on the Quaker report have said, quite rightly, that it is not remarkable so much for what it says, but it *is* remarkable because of the people who are saying it, as this is the first time that a Christian group has come out so clearly and explicitly in favour of revising entirely our ideas about what is and what is not sinful. To the Quakers, what matters is the quality and depth of any human relationship—the extent of sincere care and feeling for the other person. It is this which determines whether or not any relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is good or evil. "Members of this group", they say,

> "have been depressed quite as much by the utter abandon of many homosexuals, especially those who live in homosexual circles as such, as by the absurdity of the condemnation rained down upon the well-behaved. One must disapprove the promiscuity and selfishness, the utter lack of any real affection, which is the stamp of so many adult relationships, heterosexual as well as homosexual. We see nothing in them often but thinly disguised lust, unredeemed by that real concern which has always been the essential Christian requirement in a human relationship. But it is also obvious that the really promiscuous and degraded homosexual has not been helped by the total rejection he has had to face. Society has not said 'if you do that, that is all right, but as to the other, we cannot approve of that'. It has said 'whatever you do must be wrong: indeed you *are* wrong'. We must consider whether it is not the relationship that matters, rather than the acts that it may involve. Then homosexuals will be helped to face the moral implications of thin selfish relationships, and society will accept homosexuals as human beings."

This brings me on to my third critical talking point. It has been said that homosexuals can usually have some lovers and plenty of acquaintances, but they have very few friends. Is this true, and if so need it be true? Is there anything, in other words, in the essential nature of a homosexual which makes him inevitably bound to be more self-centred and less capable of friendship than a heterosexual is, because he is unreliable, or even downright dishonest, in his treatment of other people? I do not think so, and I know a lot of homosexuals who are the opposite of all these things. But there are also a great many who *are* like this, and what can we do to persuade them that it is unnecessary, and a mistake, both for themselves and for everyone else?

In Holland, there exists an organisation called the C.O.C., which you may have read about recently in *The Observer*.* It has worked for sixteen years with considerable success to foster a degree of *esprit de corps* among both men and women homosexuals in a way which unfortunately is still impossible here until the law is changed, but which points a way ahead. This is much more than just a social club, although there is quite a good clubhouse. They aim at helping people to resolve their personal problems in the most fruitful and constructive way that they can; and wherever possible, to establish permanent relationships based on affection in place of

*13th January, 1963. 'A Club for Homosexuals', by Roy Perrott.

casual, promiscuous ones. And not only do they encourage people to face up to their own position and accept themselves honestly; they also help them to establish franker and more sincere and honest relationships with their families, with their employers, even, and with the community around them. Their whole aim is not to separate homosexuals off from society and bring them together in a little cliquish group, but to integrate them with the community. In other words, they do not encourage them to live the whole of their social lives within the homosexual group; they rather try to provide an atmosphere of background relaxation which will enable their members not only to be friendly amongst themselves, but to be more sociable with other people and to mix in heterosexual society. This, I think, is a good thing—this aim at personal integration into the community, rather than at separating the homosexual's life as a homosexual from the rest of his life. If the Dutch can do it, why is it so impossible in this country? Even if it cannot yet be done in an organised way, because of the law, why is it impossible for people to attempt it individually, by bringing more of this sort of spirit into their own lives and into the lives of others?

I ask this because I do feel that the sort of attitudes and behaviour that one finds among numbers of English homosexuals are not particularly healthy, or particularly helpful to other people. At the Albany Trust we do come up against some hard cases, and one cannot help seeing what a large part human selfishness plays in creating a lot of needless unhappiness. The callousness with which so many people treat others, when they ought to be only too aware from their own experience of life how vulnerable other people can be, is quite lamentable. Over the past month, for instance, I have seen about twenty people whose basic trouble was the same in every case: they were all lonely. And several of them had reached the pitch of depression needed to drive them into our office to talk about it because somebody else had let them down.

I should like to think that most of the Albany Trust's active supporters are not in the habit of letting people down, and that they would even make a point of seeking out—instead of running away from—the difficult person who presents a bit of a problem, and trying to repair some of the damage. I do think that a lot of the personal problems which homosexual people have in their lives, and the dangerously nervous states which many of them get into, are caused by the legal and social attitudes of our society, because these cause a "splitting off" of the sexual part of a homosexual's nature, and of his sex life, from all the rest of it—his working life and his family life—so that everything becomes unnecessarily difficult and confused for him. In these circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that some homosexuals develop rather fragmented personalities, and become incapable of sustaining a really deep, mature relationship with anyone.

Now, you may fairly ask me, "What are you doing about it at the Albany Trust?" So for the rest of my talk, I want to give you a

brief outline of what we are doing, and what we hope to do in the future if we have the resources. I am not going to say a great deal about law reform tonight, because we have had two talks on this and it has been fairly exhaustively discussed, but the Homosexual Law Reform Society is continuing as much active publicity as it can afford. Executive Committee members are giving various talks, there are quite a lot of articles being written, and altogether we are campaigning as hard as we can. Recently I have taken part in two university debates, which I won respectively by 147 votes to 1, and by 63 votes to 3. We are going ahead with selective local advertising in various large towns, in the hope that this will stimulate support in these particular areas. When the time seems suitable—which probably will not be until after the next General Election—we shall of course promote a Bill or have the subject raised again in the House of Commons.

I believe that our main achievement in the five years that we have existed is to make it possible to discuss this subject openly at political meetings, university union debates, rotary clubs, religious groups and sometimes even Mothers' Unions. Until about five years ago, homosexuality was totally unmentionable, and it is a very good thing that it is now an accepted topic for the average discussion group's winter programme, so that over this winter we have been getting a request for about two talks a month.

The Albany Trust is pursuing three main aims—those of education, research and social help. In the field of education, we publish, besides *Man and Society*, various pamphlets and literature aimed at parents, teachers, magistrates, doctors and other people who have influence or authority, and who should know about this problem, with the aim of making them more acquainted with the facts (as distinct from the myths) about homosexuality. We have just co-operated with the National Council for Civil Liberties in producing a booklet called *Arrest*, which is a guide to the citizen's rights if he is taken into custody by the police.

As regards research, we have two projects in blueprint, and are only waiting for the necessary funds in order to get them started. Fund raising is a long and difficult business, and one has to be patient, however unwillingly. The first of these research projects is for a study of court cases during a specified period in the London area, and also in a provincial centre. The second proposed research would attempt to find out what public opinion about homosexuality is, as distinct from what we are told it is. We are always being told, by Home Secretaries and Members of Parliament and other knowledgeable persons, that there is a terrific weight of opposition to this reform. Yet whenever we go around speaking, we always win debates by huge majorities: we always find everybody we talk to agrees with us once we have put the case for reform to them, and they are often quite indignant that the law has not been changed long ago. Perhaps we would find, through some research, that most

people who have not had it drawn to their attention have no strong views on the subject at all, but are probably mildly hostile on the strength of reading or hearing occasional things such as court reports. A lot of these people probably know very little about homosexuals, and it would be very useful to find out if this is so, and what their impressions are.

In the sphere of social help we have, as I said earlier, a continuous stream of people coming to us at our office, whom we try to help as best we can by putting them in touch with suitable doctors, clergymen, lawyers and other advisers. If we had sufficient time and money to advertise the fact that we help people in this way, we would get more than we could cope with. The fact that all the people who come to us just arrive, without our doing any advertising to bring them in, does make us feel that there is a great need for very much more positive social help than exists at present for people who are puzzled and worried about their sexual lives. Some of the people who come to us are in quite dire straits, and we have had men admitted as in-patients to psychiatric hospitals within twenty-four or forty-eight hours; but most of them are just people who feel much better for a friendly chat, and go away after it with a rather more balanced outlook on life. Our counsellors in this work give a great deal of time and trouble to it—far more than we could do ourselves. We are especially grateful to people like the Camberwell Samaritans, who have been a great help to several people with quite serious problems just recently, and also to bodies such as the Voluntary Hostels Conference, who had a very interesting symposium on homosexuality a few months ago, attended by a great many probation officers, hostel wardens and others who wield a great deal of influence in the social work field.

We find that people who have been in prison and come to us asking for help in finding jobs are a big problem, because unfortunately there is more prejudice against ex-prisoners who have been in prison for a homosexual offence than there is against somebody who has merely stolen a few thousand pounds from the petty cash, for instance. This is a fault in social attitudes which is going to take a long time to put right, but we do what we can for ex-prisoners, even if it is not very much—I know of some professionally qualified men who have been six or nine months without succeeding in getting even the most menial job after they have come out of prison.

Growing out of these small beginnings, there is a very healthy realisation among social workers of all kinds that homosexuals are human beings with problems—not people who automatically deserve punishment; that in this respect the law is an ass, and that the social and human problems of homosexual people have got to be coped with rather regardless of what the law theoretically demands. All this growing awareness of the problems that homo-

sexuals are up against is a hopeful sign, and it has made us feel that the time may be riper now than it was two years ago (when we first suggested it) to get funds and backing for the idea of a psychosexual out-patients' clinic, where not only homosexuals but anybody with sexual difficulties and problems can go for help and guidance which is skilled, sympathetic and inexpensive. The Albany Trust convened some meetings about this at Church House two years ago. They came to nothing, unfortunately, but we are now trying to revive the idea and get wider support for it.

From what I have been saying, you will see that there is a great deal to be done and not nearly enough people, time or money to do it with. I have been helping the Albany Trust and the Homosexual Law Reform Society in one capacity or another ever since they started, and I am more than ever convinced as a result of doing so that law reform is an essential step towards a sexually sane society. I have also come to realise that law reform by itself is not enough; it will be merely preliminary to the real job which the Albany Trust must continue doing after the law is changed, of helping everybody in this country who has a sexual problem, whether it is a heterosexual one or a homosexual one, to find the way towards a happier, a healthier and a fuller life. After all, our lives here on earth are very short, and we should not be having to waste a minute of them on unnecessary or artificially created problems.

MR. WEDMORE: I have very much enjoyed and appreciated what Mr. Grey has said, which I think has been a considerable contribution, and I will now sit back expectantly and invite your own comments, which he will be very glad to deal with.

Q: In my district, we have recently started a Telephone Samaritan organisation for helping people who feel they want to commit suicide. There has been an enormous response from the general public interested in helping such people. Not long ago, people who wanted to commit suicide were rather looked down on, weren't they? Would it not be a good idea to enlist the sympathies of people who perhaps would not normally do much about it to help homosexuals in that way—those who have got problems? Might this not be a way of making people sympathetic who were not sympathetic to start off with? When you appeal to them and ask them to help, they are often glad to try. If there is a problem and everyone is helping, the problem tends to dissolve.

MR. GREY: I think you very rightly said at one of the earlier meetings that one tends to get too serious about this, and the Quakers very properly say in their report that sex should not be a problem, but it should rather be a thing of pleasure and enjoyment. The fact remains that for very many people it is not, and we

probably get a rather unrepresentative collection of people in our office, just as the police get an unrepresentative collection of people in the courts. The ones we see are usually people who come to us because they are in trouble or difficulties, and do have a problem.

I think you are quite right in saying that the more we can get people to help—people who want to help but are not especially knowledgeable about this particular problem—the better, so that they will come to understand it through helping another human being. This is in fact what is happening through the Samaritans. We have good contacts with the Telephone Samaritans, who get quite a high proportion of homosexual people ringing them up in acute depressive states. The Vicar of Camberwell is very sympathetic and understanding about this particular problem, and he spends a great deal of his time helping people with homosexual difficulties. He finds that only too often the main problem is making their friends and relations and parents realise that this is a human problem and that they are human beings. He was telling me earlier today of a case where the mother had been beating her son on the head because she had found out that he was homosexual, and after about two long sessions with the Vicar she ended up saying "My goodness, what have I been doing to my poor boy?" I think most people who have decent humane feelings will come to this stage once the thing is put to them. The trouble is that nobody puts it to them, and least of all homosexuals themselves, because practically everybody is terribly afraid of the consequences of telling their family and friends about this particular thing.

Q: Ought there not to be some sort of organisation which would make it easier for homosexuals to appeal for help from their fellow men?

MR. GREY: The more we can spread the idea that people like the Samaritans or the Marriage Guidance Council are willing to do all they can for homosexuals, the better. I think it would not be possible at this stage to set up an organisation specifically for this problem which operated locally. We try to do this at the Albany Trust, but one still comes up against a tremendous amount of prejudice. I personally feel that at present we shall get more done by putting it under an umbrella with other problems. For instance, the Camberwell Samaritans deal also with alcoholics, with drug addicts, with homeless people and so on. It is a good thing for organisations such as these to say: "Look, homosexuality is just another of these human problems; let's get together and solve this with all the rest". People are more sympathetic that way.

Q: Isn't the question of a sexually sane society much more of a political problem than a social problem?

MR. GREY: Well, if you ask me to give you a talk on "Towards a Politically Sane Society", I will gladly do so on another occasion,

but that is rather a different problem! I quite agree that that needs tackling as well, but I don't think I agree with you that this problem of sexual sanity is primarily a political problem. It is a political problem in the sense that political timidity is stopping a change in the law; that is quite true. But I think that a sexually sane society depends primarily upon education. In so far as education is a political matter, this is again a political question; but education surely is a matter of wiser and more mature human beings, and above all, better parents. What you have got to do is to catch people young and educate the generation of people who are growing up now to understand that the earth is not flat—that it is round; that psychology has come to stay, and that all these things which we learn about growing up and children and sexual development are broadly true, and can be applied in order to avoid some of the worst consequences. It may well be that the younger generation is much more aware of this than people who are even fifteen or twenty years older, and in that way we may get a much more sexually sane society within the next ten or fifteen years by a process of evolution, so to speak.

Q: May I put a point of view, rather than a question? I feel that the Church has escaped criticism at this meeting so far. In my view, the Church's attitude has made a brake on progress in this particular respect. The Church has made homosexuality a sin, and it seems to me that the Church is a very difficult latent power to deal with. Possibly some of the more intelligent clergymen and more progressive clergymen might do a great deal, if they really were brought to think about it.

MR. GREY: I shall answer that very shortly, because I think Mr. Wedmore ought to say something about it. There are a lot of Christians and a lot of clergymen who would entirely agree with that point of view, I imagine, and who are working hard to put it right. For instance, the Bishop of Woolwich, who took the Chair at one of our previous meetings, certainly takes a much more liberal and charitable, and may I say truly Christian view, than some Church people would do. And there are people such as Dr. Sherwin Bailey, who has written a very good book on the subject; the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, which was the first to really raise this question and played a large part in getting the Wolfenden Committee appointed; both the Archbishops, who are on our Committee together with five other Bishops; the Church Assembly, which passed a majority motion in favour of reforming the law—all these are signs that the Church is moving away from its old attitude quite a good deal.

MR. WEDMORE: I would have thought that the Church's position is changing, the Catholic Church perhaps least of all and that of the Nonconformist Churches most of all. In *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* we tackled—indeed, it was the object of the

exercise—this problem of morality and sexuality, which of course the Wolfenden Report did not have to cover, and I hope we have started some new hares in this direction. You see, it is possible to take what one might call the 'traditional' Christian view, which is that you judge sinfulness on the basis of the degree of sexual activity—a rather animal conception, even though having regard also, it is true, to things like the marriage state—or you can pay more attention, as Mr. Grey mentioned earlier, to the nature and quality of a relationship as justifying or not justifying various physical acts that might occur in connection with it. Now, I don't want to run away with this idea, but I think that certainly some of us in the Society of Friends don't take what one might call the 'traditional' attitude that all homosexuality is sinful—if indeed such a conception is possible, having regard to the fact that homosexuality is after all a state of affairs, and that you can't as a matter of semantics apply conceptions of sin to states of affairs.

I think there is now some movement away from the older attitudes, and I hope that there will be some further moves on the part of the Church. I don't really think that they are wholly to blame for the present state of affairs. There are a lot of other factors, too.

Q: In trying to influence various kinds of people, do you try to influence the police in any way?

MR. GREY: I am not at all sure that one ought to try to influence the police, because under the existing state of the law they have a job to do, and one cannot legitimately interfere with this. However, we have produced a pamphlet written by an eminent psychiatrist with a foreword by a Metropolitan magistrate, which is aimed primarily at Clerks of Courts and people who have to deal with homosexuals who come up for sentencing.

Q: I don't think the police are under any obligation to prosecute homosexuals.

MR. WEDMORE: Well, if I might comment on that as a lawyer . . . .

MR. GREY: We're both lawyers, and I think we disagree with you.

MR. WEDMORE: I was discussing this very question this afternoon with the Voluntary Hostels Conference. The question of police discretion to prosecute crimes is a very technical and complicated one. Basically, as you will appreciate, it is open to anybody to prosecute a crime, and indeed it is the duty of anybody to prosecute some crimes. The public do expect the police to prosecute what you might call "public offences", because this is what they are paid to do. Certain crimes which are committed against particular institutions, such as the Board of Inland Revenue

or the Customs and Excise or a particular store, for example, are commonly left to those representing these concerns—the Solicitor of Inland Revenue, the Solicitor of Customs and Excise, the solicitors for that particular store—to prosecute. But offences which fall in what you might call the public domain, which are deemed to injure the public—and homosexual crime is that kind of offence at the moment—would normally be left to the police to prosecute, and it would normally be expected by the public, as matters stand, that the police would not overlook an offence which was pushed under their noses. As long as you have the present law, I think you must accept that state of affairs. You see, it would be unwise not to, because if you are going to have whole categories of offences which you expect the police not to prosecute you will give them a very wide discretion as to what they are going to take notice of and what they are not. They wouldn't like this, and I don't think it would do them any good. If you want to tackle this matter, you must be forthright about it, and take the Act off the Statute Book; you cannot expect the police not to prosecute in cases that come to their notice.

Q: Why does the British Government accept lesbianism but not homosexuals?

MR. GREY: This is a question which I think everybody asks, and will go on asking without ever receiving a satisfactory answer. As you probably know, there was a move to make lesbianism a criminal offence, in the same way that homosexuality is among men, in 1921, and this was thrown out by the House of Lords on the Government's advice on the grounds that it would be an intolerable invasion of the liberty of the subject and would lead to blackmail and all sorts of evils far worse than the 'crime'. It is rather interesting that two opposing points of view came out in the last students' debate that I took part in recently. My opponent, who was very strongly against any change in the law, said that he thought that lesbianism should be covered also, and wished the law to be amended in that sense, while speakers from the floor were equally adamant that there should be a universal age of consent of sixteen for both sexes. So there is a rather wide spectrum of opinion on these matters! Obviously there will have to be a compromise somewhere. We feel that the fair compromise is to take homosexuality outside the law, as lesbianism is outside it.

Q: Can you not get it across to the Government that the present situation is illogical?

MR. GREY: I think the drawback to all this is that it is no use trying to get any logical argument over, because the thing is not going to be decided by logic alone, although logic obviously plays a part in it. The real answer to your question is that however logical we are, we shall go on beating our heads against a brick wall

if we expect anyone to change the law on grounds of logic. They will only change this law when it is more *convenient* for them to do so. It will only be more convenient to them to do so when they feel that the people who want it changed are more worth taking notice of than the people who do not want it changed. That is why we have got to keep our campaign on the broadest possible basis, and gather more support, and do it in the slow but hard way which in this country seems to take far too long, but nevertheless does get there in the end.

MR. WEDMORE: The Government has not interested itself in this subject as a political matter. The problem is slightly like the question of the Stock Exchange, where the difficulty is not to choose the shares which *you* think are best, but to choose the shares which you think most people will think are best. It is not exactly a question of persuading the majority of M.Ps—it is rather a question of persuading a majority of M.Ps that a majority of M.Ps will consent. This is perhaps a rather delicate problem, and it may not be tackled, I feel, just by making oneself a nuisance.

MR. GREY: There is, after all, still such a degree of ignorance and hostility and general dislike of the idea of homosexuality and even of the word, that one has to be extraordinarily careful what one does in this particular cause to make sure that you don't arouse more antagonism than you rally support. In my experience, after working for five years on this subject, it is amazing how much really virulent hostility you can arouse in the most unexpected places by an ill-timed approach or a wrong move. However, as I said earlier, I believe that nearly all of this hostility is the result of fearfulness or mere ignorance, and that much of it will melt away when those concerned are brought to consider the matter sensibly and calmly. The difficulty is in getting them to think about it in this way, or even to listen to what we are trying to say.

Q: Do you think that the Ministry of Health could be approached with a view to possibly founding clinics on the National Health Service for people who are needing advice and help about sexual matters? When they found out how many people there were—I think you mentioned something like two million, but I would say that there were far more than that in this country—who needed help either from a heterosexual point of view or homosexual point of view; when they found out that there was such a tremendous problem and how much people suffered terrifically with it, they would be a great deal more sympathetic to sexual offenders, and they might then be much more sympathetic to a change in the law.

MR. GREY: I entirely agree with you, and we intend to discuss our clinic project with them.

To sum up, let me say that I feel we have to work slowly but surely, because this is not an ordinary political problem. It is a

problem of education out of very, very deep ignorance—ignorance which is based on emotional prejudice and fear and dislike of the unknown. It will only be by patient work and example and personal character that we shall bring society to a point where it is possible for people to say to their friends and families and acquaintances quite casually (if this happens to be the case), "I am a homosexual", without creating the sort of reaction which it usually does create today. I believe that the reaction isn't quite as bad as it was five years ago, when the Wolfenden Report first came out. I believe that in another five years it will be very different again; but the only way we shall change it is by making people understand by degrees that this is not primarily a question of law and policemen and courts—it is a question of human beings with difficult problems who need help and understanding and sympathy and patience. We will only do that by working in the ways that the Albany Trust is trying to do to educate people, to provide more help and research and clinical work; because once you get people who are actively involved in social work dealing with people with homosexual problems and realising that they are just ordinary people who need help, this realisation will spread, slowly but surely.

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